

The Old Catholic Movement

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## Chapter I

The Old Catholic Movement has been and remains a revolt against the claims of the Papacy, but remaining within the realm of Latin Christianity. Its position has been different from that of the Orthodox Churches of the East which have never been Latin nor subject to the papal rule. The Anglican position differs from the Old Catholic in that while once both Latin and Papalist, the Anglican Communion is now neither. The Reformed Churches, laying less emphasis on membership in the visible Church, do not find themselves in agreement with Old Catholicism. The Old Catholic Movement is " ... the heir of the anti-papal movements within Latin Christendom ..."<sup>1</sup>

The Old Catholic Movement has never been large numerically, and today numbers only about half a million in the world. But this movement is the successor of several important movements in the history of the Church, and cannot be understood unless seen as the heir to Gallicanism, Febronianism and the Jansenist controversy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Old Catholicism, as it exists today, has grown out of two independent strands in the development of the European Church. The Jansenist and Gallican struggles in France eventually reached the Netherlands, where Dutch churchmen had been

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<sup>1</sup>J.B. Moss, The Old Catholic Movement (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), p. 1.

engaged in a long-time struggle with Rome. These movements joined forces and an independent church was formed. The Free-from-Rome movement and Febronianism of the eighteenth century prepared the way for the revolt of German Scholars in the late nineteenth century after Vatican Council I. The German, Swiss and Austrian Old Catholics joined with the Church of Holland, uniting these two branches of the Old Catholic Movement.

This chapter will attempt to touch on the various movements which have been significant in the development of Old Catholicism. The story of Gallicanism and Jansenism is extremely complex, and hundreds of books have been written concerning them. These movements and the story of the Church of Utrecht will be dealt with rather briefly in an effort to lay the background for later Old Catholicism.

The Church in France was early recognized as having a certain independent spirit, and the character of a separate division of the Church. In the third century a papal vicar oversaw the affairs of the region, but by the fourth century, the Bishop of Arles had definite primacy, and was the official representative of the pope. Under the Merovingian kings ecclesiastical organization was more firmly established, and growing in independence, but always in close connection with the monarchy. Now, as in later years, Church life and royal regulation were very close.

At the end of the fourteenth century the Church was rent by the Great Schism of the West, with the rivalry of popes and anti-popes. There arose a group at the University of Paris who felt that the only way to end the schism was to appeal to a general council. The Gallican party was formed at this time, "... more or less dominant among the French clergy for nearly five centuries."<sup>2</sup>

There were no recent incidents of conciliar opposition to the pope, much less conciliar supremacy. The theory of the Paris divines certainly had its roots in the history of the Church, but could not be reconciled with the development of the Church and canon law. And while there was much support to find an end to the schism, lacking was much popular support for the conciliar movement.

During the struggle between France and popes, the government took the opportunity to extend its powers of interference with the exercise of patronage and with spiritual courts. Moss has distinguished between two kinds of Gallicanism:

episcopal Gallicanism, which was the assertion of the ancient constitutional rights of the bishops assembled in council, whether national or general, against the despotic authority claimed by the popes; and royal Gallicanism, which was the claim of the civil power, first to be free from and then to interfere with and to dominate the spiritual authority of both pope and bishops. Whatever power was wrested from

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

the pope was immediately annexed by the crown, and one of its claims was the right to appoint to bishoprics, to the prejudices of the ancient right of the chapters to elect their bishops. This was the greatest weakness of Gallicanism all through its history.<sup>3</sup>

Old Catholicism as a movement is the heir of episcopal Gallicanism, but there have been occasions in its history where examples of royal Gallicanism have greatly harmed it.

The council which assembled at Constance in November, 1418, meeting to deal with the controversy existing with rival popes, was the greatest triumph of the divines of the University of Paris, for the council explicitly declared that the council is above the pope, and may judge or depose him. But the council took no real steps to curb the powers of the popes, and no real measures of reform of the church were accomplished, with no establishment of permanent self-governing national churches.

With the Hussite wars raging, pressure was brought to bear on the pope, Martin V, to summon a council at Basel, although the pope would have gladly had nothing else to do with councils. In June, 1431 Martin called the council, and two months later he was dead, succeeded by Eugene IV. Opening in July, the council was ordered to adjourn in December by Eugene, but the council refused, reaffirming the pronouncement of the council of Constance that it was su-

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 13

terior to the pope. The council ordered the holding of annual synodical meetings in every diocese, and provided for a general council every decade. It also asserted again the right of canonical election against appointments from the papacy. After considerable quarrelling with Gregory, the council deposed him and elected the last anti-pope, Felix V. Gregory, at his own council at Florence, had great support, while the council at Basel had received the support of no great European nation. The council at Basel continued until 1449, but was finally discredited and seen as a failure.

Charles VII of France, in an attempt to win independence privileges for the French Church, called in 1438 the National Assembly, which issued a decree called the Pragmatic Sanction. This decree recognized the councils of Constance and Basel and their views of conciliar supremacy. The sanction had little significance for western Christendom's well-being, generally speaking. France was now interested only in her own privileges, and Gallicanism was becoming more and more a movement to obtain special privileges for the French Church and Crown.

The real weaknesses of Gallicanism were its dependence on the power of the state, its exclusive aristocratic and academic character, "... and its acceptance of the supremacy and divine right of the pope, behind all which was the absence of any great spiritual or moral principle."<sup>1</sup> The origins of Gal-

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

licanism were in the work of scholars and in the universities. There never was a great wave of popular support. The principle of conciliarism was a sound one, but it was uncertain what would result from strengthened rights for bishops, and it was thus doubtful concerning their reform intentions. The supremacy of the pope and the Petrine primacy were not disputed. To successfully oppose papal autocracy, Gallicanism needed to show that papal claims were false, and the pope had no supremacy. But it was not conceivable for Gallicanism in the long run to see national Churches free from papal jurisdiction, giving the pope only a primacy of honor over a union of free self-governing Churches. Even though there was an example of Catholics without papacy in the Orthodox East, the Gallicans never did so far enough in their opposition to the papacy. The Old Catholics took episcopal Gallicanism to its logical conclusion by severing ties with Rome, and becoming a free Catholic Church.

When Pope Paul III summoned the council at Trent to meet the crisis of the reformation, this strongly papal-dominated meeting saw the Jesuits as the most ardent supporters of the papacy. Denying that any authority could exist within the Church not derived from the supreme authority, they were determined to eliminate any episcopal or international independence of Rome. This was to be eventually one of the points of conflict between Rome and the Archbishop of Utrecht and his chapter in the late seventeenth century.

The Jesuits made the doctrine of papal infallibility

the basis for their system, and it became the main issue between two sizable groups in the Church: the Ultramontanes and the Gallicans. While both parties believed that the Church possessed infallibility in definitive matters of faith and morals, they differed as to the organ of infallibility. The Ultramontanes held that the pope was infallible with the general councils infallible when their decisions were confirmed by the pope. The Gallicans, as stated previously, defended their position that the council confirmed by the pope is infallible, but not by the pope himself.

The Gallican position was stated at this time by Leonardicher, of the University of Paris, in De ecclesiastica et politica potestate. He asserted that ecclesiastical jurisdiction belongs to the whole Church and the authority of the pope is not over the Church as a whole, but over particular Churches, taken singly. Only the whole Church is seen as infallible, and every bishop, including the pope, is liable to error. The pope does not have the right to enact canon law "... only to interpret and execute them, nor ... (may) he impose any article of doctrine or discipline on the Church without its consent ..."

The University of Paris supported Richer during the difficult times which followed the appearance of his treatise. The University forced the Jesuits to participate in Paris' education, and ordered them to accept a statement containing

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ibid., p. 29.



four articles:

- (1) That a general council is superior to the pope.
- (2) That the pope has no jurisdiction over the temporal power of sovereigns, and cannot deprive them of it by excommunication.
- (3) That a priest who learns in the confessional of a conspiracy against the State is bound to reveal it to the civil magistrate.
- (4) That all ecclesiastics are subjects of the king and answerable to his government.<sup>6</sup>

In this case the University, center of Gallicanism, was an assertion of the rights of the French clergy against the pope, and the civil government against ecclesiastical authority.

Under Louis XIV the Crown followed a policy guided by the king's absolutism. Declaring that he possessed the "droit de régalie" he asserted possession by the Crown of all income of vacant bishoprics, and favored the four Gallican Articles. These Articles were enforced in France, but were not for other Roman Catholic nations because they were seen as the privilege of the French Church, and were an expression of opinion rather than a statement of faith.

The text of the Gallican articles is as follows:

- (1) St. Peter and his successors, vicars of Christ, and likewise the Church herself, have received from God power in things spiritual and pertaining to salvation, but not in things temporal and civil... Consequently kings and rulers are not by the law of God subject to any ecclesiastical power, nor to the keys of the Church, with respect to their temporal government. Their sub-

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 27, 30.

jects cannot be released from obeying them, nor absolved from the oath of allegiance; and this maxim, necessary to public tranquillity, and not less advantageous to the Church than to the state, is to be strictly maintained, as conformable to the word of God, the tradition of the Fathers, and the example of the Saints.

(2) The plenitude of power in things spiritual, which resided in the apostolic see and the successors of St. Peter, is such that at the same time the decrees of the Aemmenical Council of Constance, in its 4th and 5th sessions, approved as they are by the Holy See and by the practice of the whole Church, remain in full force and perpetual obligation; and the Gallican Church does not approve the opinion of those who deprecate the said decrees, as being of doubtful authority, insufficiently approved, or restricted in their application to a time of schism.

(3) Hence the exercise of the apostolic authority must be regulated by the canons enacted by the Spirit of God and consecrated by the reverence of the whole world. The ancient rules, customs, and institutions received by the realm and Church of France remain likewise inviolable; and it is for the honour and glory of the apostolic see that such enactments, confirmed by the consent of the said see and of the churches, should be observed without deviation.

(4) The Pope has the principle place in deciding questions of faith, and his decrees extend to every church and all churches; but nevertheless his judgement is not irreversible until confirmed by the consent of the Church.

This has been only a sketch of what the Gallican movement meant to France and the Church, citing a few of the many clashes between the French Church and Crown and

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 54, 55.

the papacy. The independent spirit and the emphasis upon conciliarism and the episcopate found later in Old Catholicism certainly finds many of its antecedents in Gallicanism.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Gallicanism was not the only controversy raging in the French Church. Jansenism was an important issue, sometimes supported by Gallicans, who often found a common bond in Jansenist opposition to the Jesuits. The two groups were marked alike by their anti-papal sentiments.

Jansenism, in the seventeenth century particularly, was but yet another phase in the age-old dispute over the doctrine of grace and predestination. For well over a century Jansenism divided the French Church, developing a puritanical and separatist spirit, analogous in many ways to that of French Calvinism. Because the writings of Augustine, after Saint Paul, were so influential for both Luther and Calvin, the Counter-Reformation had been driven into the attitude of "... practical, though veiled, hostility toward his special teachings."<sup>8</sup> As the breach became greater between the Roman Church and the Reformation bodies, the spirit of semi-Polarianism in the life of the Roman Church became more and more important. The writings of Augustine seemed like a new revelation in 1612 for two students at the Uni-

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<sup>8</sup> Samuel A. Jackson, ed., The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1910), VI, p. 95.

versity of Louvain, Cornelius Jansen and exercised the same, later abbé of St. Cyran.

After much study of Augustine, Jansen became convinced that Roman theologians had strayed far from the doctrines of the primitive Church, and he began to work for reform. His efforts, and the results of his studies, were centered in his comprehensive work, Augustinus, seu doctrina sancti Augustini de humanae naturae sanitate, seipius, medicina adversus Pelagianos et Masilienses, in three volumes, published in 1640. The first volume is an historical exposition of the semi-Pelagian heresies; the second sets forth Augustine's doctrine as to the state of the innocent and the fall; the last volume treats of the grace of Christ and of predestination, in the spirit of Augustine. A great effort was made by the Jesuits to prohibit the appearance of the work, while it was still at press at Louvain.

A papal bull, In omnem, appeared in 1652, reproaching Jansen, four years after his death. For several years there was strong resistance to publishing the bull on the part of a number of bishops and universities, before it was finally published and its subscription enforced.

Following the death of Jansen the leader of the movement was Antoine Arnauld, professor at the Sorbonne, who in 1643 published de la fréquente communion, based on the doctrine of predestination as taught by Augustine and understood by Jansen. At the same time the Jesuits were diligently working

to obtain the condemnation of Jansenism, assisted in their effort by French Dominicans, while the Jansenists were aided by Spanish and Italian Dominicans. The University of Louvain and the Sorbonne collaborated to prevent the Jesuits from succeeding in their efforts to condemn Jansen's doctrines. Because no particular doctrines had been pinpointed in the papal bull as heretical, the Jesuits attempted to formulate in definite propositions the heresy of which they accused Jansenism. The propositions were reduced to five and were forwarded to Rome in 1650.

The propositions of the Jesuits were these:

- (1) Some commandments of God are impossible of execution by the just, and the areas by which they might be truly fulfilled in looking;
- (2) in the state of fallen nature inward grace is never resisted;
- (3) in the fallen state merit and demerit do not depend on a liberty which excludes internal necessity; freedom from external constraint suffices;
- (4) the semi-religians admitted the necessity of an inward preventient grace for the performance of every (good) act, even for the first act of faith; their nature consisted in their assertion that this grace was of such a nature that the will of man was able either to resist or to obey it;
- (5) it is semi-religian to say that Christ died or shed his blood for all men without exception.

Pope Innocent X condemned these theses in 1653 with the bull Sacrosanctae. Although confirmed neither by the assembly

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Ibid., p. 94.

of clergy nor by the parliament, the bull was sent to the various dioceses for subscription, through the efforts of the Jesuits. The Jansenists indicated their willingness to condemn the five propositions as heretical, but refused to acknowledge that they were propositions of Jansen. The majority of the Jansenists admitted the infallibility of the pope in matters of faith, but thought that he had erred in the realm of human knowledge in this case. In 1654 the pope declared that the five propositions were contained in Jansen's Augustinus, and that their condemnation as the teaching of Jansen would have to be subscribed to on pain of deprivation.

When a priest at Saint Julienne, Paris, in 1655 refused to grant absolution to the protector of a priest who had refused subscription to the bull, Antoine Arnauld published his seconda lettera à un due di pair. Opponents immediately extracted two propositions from this work: "the grace of God, without which we can not do anything good, had left Peter at the time he denied the Lord; ...since not everybody can convince him, that the five condemned theses are in Jansen, a submission of respectful silence under the papal decision suffices; the possession of faith cannot be required from the soul."<sup>10</sup> But unexpectedly Arnauld was expelled from the Sorbonne in 1656 and some sixty professors

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<sup>10</sup>ibid., p. 27.

left with him rather than sign his excommunication. At this time Blaise Pascal sent out his l'lettre à un provincial, in which he unleashed a blistering attack on the Jesuits. Pascal more than any other brought the entire issue into the public view of the educated laity, whereas it had been largely a dispute among theologians only.

Louis XIV was determined to rid France of the Jansenists. In 1660 a decree was issued which condemned the five theses of Jansen, and subscription was required not only of the clergy but also of laity. Those refusing were generally imprisoned, but there were some executions. Arnauld insisted upon the important distinction between fall and freit, though in 1656 Pope Alexander VII, in ad sanctam beati Petri sedem, had again laid down the fact that Jansen had presented the five propositions in an objectionable sense. A new constitution was issued in 1664 requiring all clergy to accept the papal promulgations of 1642, 1653, and 1656. There was considerable opposition, with several bishops registering their protests and indicating their reservations with the intention of protecting the doctrine of Augustine. The strength of the opposition had a profound effect on the clergy and the king. After some hesitation, the distinction between fall and freit was admitted by Pope Clement IX in 1668, and a partial peace was established.

The disputes were revived in 1693 by publication of

nouveau testament en françois avec des reflexions morales, by rcsassius quesnel, which had first been seen as early as 1671. The book was dedicated to the Bishop of Chalons, Noailles.

Louis XIV asked for more severe measures against the Jansenists from Clement. In 1705 the bull, Vineam Domini, was issued which strongly condemned the five theses attributed to Jansen. The center of Jansenism at this time was the famous convent at Port Royal, which refused submission. The nuns were driven out in 1709 and the convent destroyed in 1710. Bishop Noailles was now the cardinal-archbishop of Paris, and he received the wrath of the Jesuits because he protected quesnel and his work.

The pope issued in 1713 the bull, Unigenitus, in which one hundred-one propositions from quesnel were condemned as Jansenist or otherwise heretical. Among these are some that may be found "... almost literally in holy Scripture and in Augustine...(and)...even...substantially identical with the decrees of the council of Trent, as for instance, the second, 'The grace of Jesus Christ is necessary for all good works; without it nothing (truly good) can be done'; the twenty-ninth, 'Outside of the church no grace is given'; and the fifty-first, 'Faith justifies when it is operative, but it is operative only through love.'<sup>11</sup> The pope

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.



in his zeal condemned a number of views in no way peculiar to the Jansenists, and many non-Jansenist Catholics were especially disturbed by the heavy blow against popular Bible reading.

There was an extensive correspondence at this time between Cardinal Noailles and others and William Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury. Wake emphasized the need for a Gallican break with the papacy, and hoped for a reformation in France. Wake reiterated the Gallican position of granting the papacy only a primacy of honor. But while Sorbonne teachers and theologians were disturbed by the papal policy toward the Jansenists and by the Unigenitus, they were not convinced that there should be union between the Gallican and Anglican Churches, and that a national French Church should be established.

The parliament obeyed the King's order to make the bull a part of the law of the kingdom. The Sorbonne was split into several parties, with some important teachers banished or deprived of their vote. Louis wanted to settle the whole matter by calling a national council, but the pope did not approve of such an idea. The struggle led to such fierce quarrels with the judges, who were almost all always intensely Gallican in spirit, and regarded the bull as the mark of triumphant ultramontaniam.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>"Utrecht," Encyclopedia Britannica, 30th ed., vol. XLII, p. 914.

The most ardent Jansenists followed Quesnel to Holland where they were warmly received by the Dutch Catholic body, which had always been sympathetic toward the Jansenists, although without regarding themselves as pledged to the Augustinus.

The great issue of this struggle which continued for many more decades was over the infallibility of the pope and his right to demand blind obedience. The issue had been pinpointed by the condemnation of the five theses supposedly in the Augustinus, but the pope never did cite references for the propositions. The Moral Reflexions of Quesnel was condemned as heretical, and blind obedience was expected by the pope. There was permitted no criticism of papal pronouncements even though they were sometimes hasty and inaccurate.

The opposition of the Society of Jesus to the Jansenists is quite understandable in the light of fact, for Jansenism represented a very real threat to their idea of Church government and to their concept of the universal mission of the Church. Refusing to accept the idea of a developing church tradition, Jansenists preferred the primitive Church and the teaching of the early Fathers. The bishops' independence of papal authority vigorously maintained. Jansenists opposed intervention upon the rights of the clergy as well. They stressed " ... the freedom of the individual's conscience on

on all matters except doctrine ..."<sup>13</sup> Even though Pascal, Arnould and Quésnel accepted the Petrine claims of the papacy and the council of Trent, their difference of opinion was not allowed by Rome. The Church was becoming more and more totalitarian, and Ultramontanism was the inevitable result.

The story of the Church in Holland is a vital part of the development of Old Catholicism, for it was to the Netherlands that the persecuted Jansenists fled. Although the Church in Holland has been called the Jansenist Church of Utrecht, it is more accurate to say the Old Catholic Church of Utrecht, since the Dutch Church sprang from the privilege of their Church insisted upon by the clergy rather than from doctrinal principles, and ante-date the arrival of the Jansenists.

The origins of the Dutch Church go back to the early eighth century, founded by Saint Willibrord, its first bishop. A certain spirit of independence was evident rather early in Utrecht's history, for several successors of Willibrord opposed the growing tendency to regard the pope as the unrestricted governor of all Christendom. The bishop of Utrecht was originally chosen by the clergy, but in 1146 the Emperor Conrad III restricted the right to the chapters of Saint Martin's Cathedral and Saint Saviour's Church. The choices were not always accepted by Rome.

About the time of Luther's appearance in 1517, the

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<sup>13</sup>20th Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge  
(Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1957) I, p. 392.

diocese of Utrecht began to undergo some marked changes, although indirectly. Emperor Charles V deprived in 1528 the bishop of Utrecht the right of exercising the episcopal office and forbade the canons of the chapter to elect a bishop. As a result of the Spanish-Dutch conflict, the motives were political. In order to subdue The Netherlands, Spain sought the aid of the papacy, with a plan to multiply the number of dioceses and fill them with bishops and clergy loyal to Spain. In 1559, at the request of Philip, Utrecht became an archbishopric with five suffragan sees. It was at this time agreed that the king would select the bishops, subject to confirmation by the pope.

The threat of the Reformation was a very real one for Holland, a serious threat to the Catholic Church now weakened after Spain had ended her struggle in The Netherlands. All that remained eventually was the archdiocese of Utrecht and the Haarlem bishopric. Catholics became a minority and were under the care of Utrecht. About 1573 the public exercise of Catholic worship was forbidden. As incumbents of episcopal sees died it became increasingly difficult to fill their places. After the death of Archbishop Frederic von Schenk in 1580, two successors were nominated, but never received consecration.

The Utrecht chapter chose Casbold Vosmeer as vicar general in 1583 because of the vacancy, and by 1592 the quaitie in Holom was able to obtain his nomination. Finally in 1602

the cathedral was consecrated in 1606 by order of Clericus  
1611, as Archbishop of Philippi. His successors in office,  
although earlier for the see of St. Willibrord, were officially  
" ... Archbishops in partibus."<sup>14</sup> Gasboli was succeeded by  
Philip Jansen, Jacob de la Poer, John Heeressels and Peter  
Vande. In 1688 Vande became the last Archbishop prior to the  
schism.

As in the controversies in France between Gallicans  
and Jesuits, Jansenists and Jesuits, the Jesuits were also  
involved in the Dutch controversy. The Dutch secular clergy  
saw the Jesuits as intruders who made it more difficult for  
them to work. The chapter of Utrecht found that they had  
several disagreements with the Society of Jesus, namely that  
their conception of the Church as a community of communities  
was not the same as the Jesuit idea. There were charges and  
counter-charges of heterodoxy. There were devotional dif-  
ferences as well as doctrinal. There was the austere piety  
of the secular clergy, derived from the brothers of the Common  
Life, which found them quite opposed to the Jesuit devotion  
to the Sacred Heart and Immaculate Conception. The Dutch op-  
posed the Jesuit system of casuistry, feeling that sin was  
encouraged by the giving of absolution too easily.

Because of the difficulties between secular clergy and  
Jesuits, Archbishop Heeressels went to Rome in 1670 and presen-

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<sup>14</sup>John Leffer, "The Story of the Church of Holland,"  
The Liturgical Church, 1911 (1<sup>st</sup> December 1937), p. 263.

ted thirteen gravamina against activities of the Society.

The charges were favorably received in Rome, since others had made similar charges. In 1671 most of the Archbishop's complaints were ruled well-founded by a commission of cardinals.

Only eight years later the difficulties were once again very evident and the Archbishop made new charges against the Jesuits. Many Jansenist refugees were coming into Holland from France and Belgium, including Arnold, a friend of the Archbishop. After Leercowels' death in 1668 the chapter of Utrecht and Haarlem elected as Archbishop, von Dessel. He was rejected by the papacy because of a treatise he had written on indulgences, which had been denounced and placed on the Index. Hoping to avoid a second refusal, the chapter sent a slate of three candidates to Rome. Peter Joide was chosen from this slate and was confirmed as Archbishop in September, 1682, and consecrated in February of the next year in Brussels.

About 1684 the Jesuits presented charges to Rome accusing Joide, among other things, " ... of having his young clerics trained and instructed in the spirit of Jansenism."<sup>11</sup> The accusations were discussed by a commission of cardinals, presided over by the pope himself. The charges were dismissed and Joide was cleared. Shortly after this an anonymous treatise appeared--"Short Memorial Concerning the Jansen-

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



administration of the church, with ordinations of priests  
taken by John and Francis Wilkes. Several secular clerics  
who had fled to London to the English church, to Holland  
in 1712. In 1719 Bishop Antoine Marie Varlet, a missionary  
bishop assigned to London, was passing through Holland, and  
he confirmed several hundred persons for the church of Christ.  
Varlet was suspended for his actions, and also accused of  
being a Jansenist. He returned to Holland in 1721, where the  
chapter of Utrecht had elected a bishop, who was to be the  
archbishop. Van der Groen was informed of the election, but gave no  
answer. Varlet consecrated Steenvoort on 15 October 1721, making  
symbolic the break between the churches of Rome and Utrecht.

Joseph Benedict Will responded to the consecration of  
Steenvoort in February, 1725, declaring it invalid. Steen-  
voort died in April of that year, and was succeeded by arch-  
bishops Lottiers and van der Groen, both consecrated by Var-  
let.

The most noted Old Catholic bishop of this time was  
John Peter Lottiers, who succeeded van der Groen. Lottiers,  
unlike his predecessors, decided to consecrate bishops for  
the former sees of Utrecht (1730) and Steenvoort (1735) as well  
as the episcopate of the Old Catholic Church would not die out,  
since Bishop Varlet was now dead. Lottiers was elected as  
consecrated bishop of Utrecht, and the see of Steenvoort was  
occupied by Cornelius Lottiers. The election of Lottiers as  
bishop of Utrecht took place in 1733. The election



of Rome was attacked for its corruption of Christian teaching; the position of the old Catholic Church was made clear; and some practical changes were made.

The good friend Pierre Le Moine, living in London, who declared that "... the five propositions attributed to Jansen contained the Catholic Faith on the question of grace."<sup>17</sup> The good friends told Cox they had never declared that the propositions were orthodox, but that they were not in the Augustines. The acts of the synod were published both in Latin and Dutch, and sent to all bishops of the Catholic Church. Reaction was generally favorable, and even Pope Clement XIII is reported to have been somewhat impressed with the acts of the council.<sup>18</sup> Although a commission of cardinals condemned it.

Alindaerts died in October 1767 and was succeeded by van Alindaerts. Notice was sent the pope and he responded with excommunication when the new archbishop was consecrated by the bishops of Haarlem and Leuven. The excommunicated archbishop received the papal bull of excommunication sent to Utrecht. "Nevertheless, the new archbishop received letters of communion from bishops in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, and from a number of priests, who recognized fully, not only that the Church of Utrecht was orthodox in doctrine, but also that her claims

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<sup>17</sup> Boss, The Old Catholic Movement, p. 174.

<sup>18</sup> Jan Labart Lagervay, "The Dutch Old Catholics," The Living Church, LXVI (27 June 1955), p. 21.

to canonical jurisdiction were sound."<sup>19</sup> During this period there were several attempts at reconciliation, but they did not meet with success.

A serious threat to the continued existence of the Old Catholic Church occurred during the time of French sovereignty in Holland. After the death of the Archbishop (van Aylva) in 1808 and the bishop of Haarlem in 1810, the government refused to allow further episcopal elections. Only after the fall of Napoleon and the return of independence to Holland was the election possible which chose Willibrord van Os the Archbishop of Utrecht in 1818. He was consecrated by the last surviving Old Catholic bishop, Gisbert de Jongh of Deventer. Johannes van was consecrated bishop of Haarlem in 1819 and was "the only bishop of the independent Utrecht succession who was never excommunicated ..."<sup>20</sup>

When the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was promulgated on 8 December 1854, as a dogma necessary to salvation, the only formal protests were made by the three Old Catholic Bishops of Holland. Archbishop Johannes van Santen, with bishops van Duyl and Nuykamp protested on three grounds: "it was contrary both to scriptures and tradition; the bishops of the Universal Church had never been consulted about it; it was a new doctrine, and, therefore, according

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<sup>19</sup> Cross, The Old Catholic Movement, p. 137.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 156.

to infallible and St. Vincent of Lerins, a false one."<sup>21</sup>  
An appeal was made for a general council.

With the declaration of papal infallibility at the  
First Vatican Council, there arose in 1870 in much of Europe  
a movement in opposition to papalist and repalist of Rome.  
This Old Catholic movement turned to the Old Catholic Church  
of Holland requesting that the episcopate be bestowed on the  
German movement. A bishop was consecrated in Utrecht, 1873.  
The Church of Utrecht was to be no longer an isolated, small  
body of separate Latin Christians. They were to be joined  
by other Rome-free Catholics of Germany, Switzerland, Aus-  
tria, and other small groups in Europe, and even in the Uni-  
ted States.

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<sup>21</sup> ibid., p. 189.

## Chapter II

There had been considerable preparation for the break which occurred in Germany in 1870 over the declaration of papal infallibility and supremacy. A book appeared as early as 1763, written by Bishop Johann Nikolaus Hontheim, which urged reform of papal power and curial abuses. The book called for a return to the spirit of primitive Christianity, and appeared under the pseudonym of Justinus Febronius.

Febronius insisted that the pope was the first among the bishops, but was subordinate to the whole. The Church was a monarchical constitution and the bishops were equal to each other. The pope stood under the general council of the bishops of the whole Church, and he had usurped power which rightly belonged to the body of bishops. There were really no new ideas here, but Febronius systematized and presented his thoughts in such a way that the book had a considerable influence on ecclesiastical politics in Italy, Portugal, Austria and Germany. Febronius had considered the Gallican claims not the exclusive right of the French Church, but of all the Churches.

Another German who preceded the break with Rome was Ignaz H. von Jessenberg, who was really the forerunner of Old Catholicism in central Europe. A supporter of Febronianism in the early 19th century, Jessenberg worked for a self-governing national German Catholic Church. The administrator of a diocese, he was never consecrated because of

opposition from Rome. His ideas stirred little interest at the time, but they paved the way for strong Old Catholic areas in southern Germany and in northern Switzerland.

The Council which the Church of Holland had wanted for many years, and which many conciliarists of various nations had looked for, finally came in 1870 with the Vatican Council. A number of bishops vigorously opposed the declaration of the council concerning the papal authority, but every bishop eventually signed in agreement. Of the fairly vocal minority in opposition, only a few of the minority persisted in the logical course indicated by their position, feeling that the council allowed no freedom of discussion.

The opposition held that the new dogma had completely changed the nature of the Catholic Church, and that it was their duty to remain faithful to the "Old Catholic Church." One historian says

With all due respect to their courageous witness to the truth, it must nevertheless be said their claim does not quite fit the facts of history. The trend towards infallibility had been marked in the Roman Church for centuries.... To be sure, the elevation of this opinion to the status of an ecclesiastical dogma of universal obligation was a novelty. To that extent the charge of the Old Catholics was justified.<sup>22</sup>

Feelings ran very high during the period immediately following the council. The strong-willed Pius IX is said "... to have declared the opposition to be more formidable

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<sup>22</sup> Walther von Loewenich, Modern Catholicism (New York: Saint Martin's Press, Inc., 1959), p. 51.

than the French Revolution and more to be dreaded than the Communists."<sup>23</sup> The apprehensions of the pope were not unfounded, even though somewhat exaggerated.

After the decree was issued from Rome, the opposition was organized in Nuremberg, on 27 August 1870. Professors from Bonn, Breslau, Munich, Munster, Prague, Würzburg and other centers gathered, under the leadership of the highly respected Johann Josef Ignaz von Döllinger.

A group of laymen gathered at Königswinter in September 1870 and resolved: "Considering that the council ... did not deliberate in perfect freedom ... the undersigned Catholics (1,359 in number) ... do not recognize the decrees concerning the absolute power of the pope and reject them as innovations in direct contradiction to the uniform faith of the Church."<sup>24</sup>

The last bishop to submit did so in April 1871, and ecclesiastical pressure was brought to bear on the professors who resisted. Döllinger did not cease his opposition, and was excommunicated by Archbishop Scherr (who had himself opposed the dogma) on 18 April 1871. Döllinger acknowledged the fact of his excommunication, but said that it was unjust and invalid. He continued to consider himself and his associates Roman Catholics. He opposed the organization of a

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<sup>23</sup>Kenneth Scott Latourette, The Nineteenth Century in Europe, I (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1958), p.285.

<sup>24</sup>Schaff-Herzog, VIII, p. 230.

separate church at first, but soon gave his support to the Old Catholic movement.

The necessity had been seen for uniting the scattered clergy and people who adhered to the position of the minority. A congress was held in Munich, 22-24 September 1871, with Professor J.F. von Schulte of Bonn presiding, at which the conclusions of the previous meetings were endorsed. The direction which the movement should take was decided upon, and provision was made for the cure of souls, with the organization of congregations in various places soon thereafter.

Bismarck's Kulturkampf broke out in 1871 in the form of anti-Roman Catholic measures. Although a Protestant himself, Bismarck supported the Old Catholics in a calculated attempt to weaken the Roman Catholics. In June 1871 the government ordered the Roman Catholic bishops not to bar the numerous Old Catholic professors from continuing their duties. It is not difficult to see why Bismarck chose the Old Catholics as an instrument to undermine Roman Catholicism, with their very patriotic attitude and assumption of the character of a national Church.

The implications of the Kulturkampf and its results are diverse. It did not benefit the Old Catholic movement at length. The movement has long been criticized by sympathizers and opponents alike for the role played by Old Catholicism. Rather than dividing the Roman Catholics,

the Kulturkampf drew the German Roman Catholic community closer together, strengthening their loyalty to the pope, whose papal infallibility they now enthusiastically defended. Pio Nono had to deal with the effects of the Kulturkampf in other countries as well. Before his death in February 1878, Pius IX could foresee the victory of the Roman Church over the Kulturkampf. His successor, Leo XIII, did see the end of the restrictions, and Bismarck declared the Kulturkampf ended in 1887.

Döllinger attended the second congress in Cologne, 20 September 1872, where provision was made for the election of a bishop. The election took place on 4 June 1873, the choice falling on J. A. Reinkens, professor of theology at Breslau. Reinkens was consecrated by Bishop Heycamp at Rotterdam, 11 August 1873, after having been elected by a group of priests and laymen. After his consecration, Bishop Reinkens was quickly recognized as the Catholic Bishop, by the governments of Prussia, Bavaria and Hessen-Darmstadt, all areas in which the Kulturkampf was pressed with some vigor.<sup>25</sup> Bishop Reinkens was excommunicated by name on 9 November, by Pius IX. The second congress also made provision for the government of the Church, establishing a synodical board, with clerical and lay members.

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<sup>25</sup> Konrad Algermissen, Christian Denominations (trans. Joseph W. Grundner) (St. Louis, Missouri: F. Herder Book Co., 1946), p. 357.



The third congress was held at Constance in September 1873. Thereafter the congresses were regularly held, with their function limited to general discussions for the general good of the Church, leaving the specific care of the Church to the synod. The congress was held in the same hall in which the Gallican Council of Constance had met. There were visitors present, representing Eastern Orthodoxy and Anglicanism, with Old Catholic delegates from outside Germany.

The first synod was held in Bonn in 1874, and this meeting, and successive synods, shaped the polity and life of the Church. The possibility for union with Protestants was not ruled out, and an interest was shown for discussions with the Orthodox.

The synod issued a catechism and a manual of instruction, including only those doctrines seen as apostolic. Auricular confession was made optional, but was to be encouraged. Attempts were made to do away with abuses surrounding the sacrament of penance, fasts and festivals, and various financial matters. The Mass was to be celebrated in the vernacular. The Church was to be governed by a board of clergymen and laymen, with the bishop as president and a layman as vice-president. The representative body of the Church, the synod, was made of priests and delegates from all the congregations. The synod was to take care of all the legislative, judicial, disciplinary and administrative matters.

Pastors and assistant pastors were to be chosen by the congregations, with episcopal approval.

Plans were formulated at the second congress for union conferences to be held in 1874 and 1875 in Bonn, under the direction of Döllinger. The conferences were not to be Old Catholic meetings, but interdenominational gatherings for the discussion of problems of Church union. Orthodox, Protestants, Anglicans and Old Catholics gathered for this discussion of their differences.

The Dutch Old Catholics were not present for this conference in 1874, for a certain estrangement had taken place between the conservative Dutch and the more progressive Germans and Swiss. The Church of Utrecht still held to the Council of Trent, while the Germans were largely ignoring it. The Germans realized that if any progress were to be made with the Orthodox and Anglicans, this progressive view was a necessity. The agreement of the churches was amazing in many respects, for the differences were found to be considerably less than anticipated. Döllinger chaired the conference, and the success of the meeting can be credited to him.

The second conference was held in August 1875, which was presided over again by Döllinger. The conference was occupied chiefly with the filioque controversy, although a strong defense of the validity of Anglican orders was made

by Döllinger. As a result of the conference the Old Catholics dropped the filioque from the Nicene Creed. This was the last interdenominational conference held under the auspices of the Old Catholics because of the circumstances in Europe at the time and the fact that the attention of the Old Catholics needed to be turned to their own affairs.

In Switzerland a number of priests and laymen, refusing to accept the Vatican decrees, adopted a constitution for the Christian Catholic Church. The Church in Switzerland has never been called "Old Catholic," although it is the Swiss form of Old Catholicism. The first synod was held in Olten in June 1875, and in the following June, Eduard Herzog, professor of Catholic theology at Bern, was elected bishop. He had left the Roman Church in 1872, and became pastor of Christian Catholic churches in Crefeld, Prussia, and later Olten and Bern. Bishop Herzog, a very able and popular leader, guided the Swiss Old Catholics for over forty years. In 1880 he was invited by the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church to attend the General Convention. He visited parishes and confirmed, and gained the support and admiration of many American Episcopalians. Development of the Church in Switzerland was similar to that in Germany. Communion in both kinds was made optional, and new regulations for the observance of fasts and festivals were adopted, with provision for Mass in the vernacular.

In Austria early efforts to organize the Old Catholics were opposed by the government. In 1875 opposition was withdrawn, and delegates met in Vienna the following year. Legal recognition was given the Old Catholic Church of Austria on 18 October 1877. A provisional synod was held in Vienna, July 1879, with the reforms of the Churches in Germany and Switzerland accepted. The first regular synod was held in June 1880, with five priests and several laymen present. The twentieth synod was held in 1900 with 60 delegates, representing almost 17,000 members, and reporting an amazing growth.

The government did not allow the election of a bishop, the alleged reason being that there was no adequate provision for a stipend, apart from an incumbency. Therefore the Austrian Old Catholic Church was ruled by an administrator who was styled Bistumsverweser. He received the holy oils from the Bishops of Bern or Bonn, and administered confirmation as do Eastern Orthodox priests. Priests were ordained in Germany or Switzerland, and many were obtained by the accession of priests formerly of the Roman Church.<sup>26</sup>

The Old Catholic movement was less than successful in France and Italy. An active interest was taken by Charles Hyacinth Loyson, former Carmelite on the staff of Notre Dame

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<sup>26</sup>P. J. Vozel, "The Old Catholic Church in Austria," The Living Church, CXIV (29 June 1947), pp. 14, 15.

de Paris, and Abbe Aichaud, and a congregation was founded in Paris in 1878, under the supervision of bishops in Holland and Switzerland, assisted by Anglican bishops. The movement was never very strong in Italy, although a meeting was held in Naples, in 1875, of delegates from several congregations, at which they elected Luigi Proto Giurlo as the bishop of the Italian National Catholic Church.

Several communities of Lohemians in Russia attached themselves to the Old Catholic movement. They obtained the recognition and support of the State for their priests. In 1880 permission was granted for a conference to frame the constitution for a permanent organization.

There was a revolutionary element in the Old Catholic churches in Germany, Switzerland and Austria which was not present in the Dutch Church. From the first, the movement in these countries "... took the form of national churches, both on principle and through necessity."<sup>27</sup> The Church of Utrecht had been separated from Rome for 150 years, during which time she had asserted her acceptance of the decrees of the council of Trent. Two years after the consecration of Bishop Reinkens, the Germans and Swiss were ignoring the Tridentine decrees. This accounted for the coolness which developed between Utrecht and other Old Catholic groups.

The period of estrangement did not last long. Arch bishop Johannes Heykamp, who had been consecrated 8 April 1875

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<sup>27</sup> Moss, The Old Catholic Movement, p. 271.

by the Bishop of Haarlem and Bishop Reinkens, summoned a conference of Old Catholic Bishops. This conference met in September 1889 with five Old Catholic members of the episcopate present, representing the Dutch, Swiss and German churches. Unanimous agreement was reached at the conference on three important points.

(1) The five bishops agreed to establish a Bishops' Conference for mutual consultation. No church was to have priority or jurisdiction over any other; all the bishops agreed that they would not consecrate any bishop without the acceptance of the Convention of Utrecht by the candidate.

(2) An International Old Catholic Congress was to be held every two years.

(3) The five bishops issued a declaration of doctrinal principles by which all Old Catholic bishops and priests were to be bound. This document, known as the Declaration of Utrecht (Utrechtserklärung), is still the doctrinal basis of Old Catholicism.<sup>28</sup>

While not present at the conference, the Austrian Old Catholics later accepted the declaration of Utrecht.

The declaration itself reaffirmed the Vincentian Canon: *Id teneamus, quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est; hoc est eternum vere proprium catholicum.* The group accepted the decisions of the ecumenical councils held before the schism between East and West. Once again the Vatican Council was strongly repudiated, along with the declaration of the Immaculate Conception of 1854. The most

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 280.

significant article of the declaration was the rejection of the decrees of the Council of Trent in matters of discipline and faith which differed with the teaching of the primitive Church.

Döllinger died in 1899, at the age of 91. The leader of the Old Catholic movement for many years, he had been the one individual who, with great skill and learning, had given direction to the Church. Following his excommunication from Rome, Döllinger never again functioned as a priest, and there have been attempts to prove that he never did actually join the Old Catholic Church. He received the last rites and burial from Old Catholics, and was on the role of their clergy when he died. Roman Catholics in Munich treated Döllinger with great respect even after his excommunication and it was not unknown for him to be given the Sacrament in one of the city's parishes. The government of Bavaria took no notice of Döllinger's excommunication and he remained the dear of the Chapels Royal.<sup>29</sup>

In accord with the declaration of Utrecht, International Old Catholic Congresses were held every two years, now with the complete support of the Dutch. The congress held in Cologne in September 1890 was attended by Archbishop Heykamp and many of his priests. When Heykamp died in 1892 he was succeeded by Gerardus Gul, who was consecrated by the

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<sup>29</sup>The Living Church, XII (8 March 1890), p. 787.

bishops of Haarlem and Deventer, and Bishop Reinkens. The day of Old Catholic consecrations by only one bishop was now past.

The Old Catholic groups experienced a slow but steady growth during the next decade. The first World War found German and Austrian Old Catholics on one side, the Poles on the other, and the Dutch and Swiss Old Catholics neutral. The churches were weak, but they did manage to survive somehow.

After World War I and the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Old Catholic Church was divided into two self-governing churches: the Austrian and Czech churches. The churches grew steadily, and many mission stations were started. The Austrian Church was permitted to elect a bishop, Adalbert Schindelaar, who was consecrated in Bonn in 1925. The death of this first Austrian bishop came the next year, and he was succeeded by Robert Tuchler, who served the church from 1928 to 1942. Stefan Torok, who was consecrated after World War II, has been the Bishop of Austria since 1948.

In 1925 the tenth Old Catholic Congress was held in Bern, the first to be assembled since the war. The Archbishop of Utrecht, Franciscus Kenninck, formally recognized the validity of Anglican orders, which up to this point the Dutch Church, unlike the others, had always denied. An Episcopalian observer at the congress wrote that "... there was no anti-Roman passion; the Old Catholic Movement has never



been Protestant, though it is strongly and steadily confident in refusing the new Roman Catholic dogmas and discipline. Nothing could have been more satisfactory than the outlook upon the problems of cooperation among all Christians, and corporate reunion with all Catholics outside the papal obedience."<sup>30</sup>

After World War I there was a revolt among Roman Catholics in Yugoslavia. A large number of priests asked the pope for permission to celebrate Mass in Croatian. The pope saw no reason for the Croatian Catholics to say Mass in a modern language and refused the petition. In 1923 an Old Catholic Church was formed, and spread quickly among the Croatian and Slovene Catholics. There had been a spirit of independence in Yugoslavia for some time, for many of the Croatian bishops had opposed the dogma of papal infallibility.

Marko Kalogjera, former canon of the Split Cathedral, was elected Old Catholic bishop, and was consecrated by the Archbishop of Utrecht on 25 February 1924 in Holland. There was a dispute between Kalogjera and other churches of the Utrecht Union in 1928 over Church government. In 1933 relations were severed (see Chapter IV).

When the seventh Lambeth Conference met in 1930, an official delegation from the Old Catholic churches was sent

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<sup>30</sup>The Living Church, LXVIII (3 October 1925), p. 248.

to London to discuss reunion possibilities. The group, headed by the Archbishop of Utrecht, stirred the interest of the Anglicans, and a commission was appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to enter formal negotiations with the Old Catholics.

The meeting took place in Born on 2 July 1931, lasting only one day. The only threat to the success of the meeting came from Anglican Evangelicals who were suspicious of the Old Catholics and opposed reunion with them. They were under some confusion concerning the Old Catholics, for they thought they were still bound by the Tridentine decrees. After clarification of issues and considerable discussion of various of the 39 Articles, the following statement was approved by representatives of both Communions:

- (1) Each communion recognizes the catholicity and independence of the other, and maintains its own.
- (2) Each communion agrees to admit members of the other communion to participate in the sacraments.
- (3) Intercommunion does not require from either communion the acceptance of all doctrinal opinion, sacramental devotion, or liturgical practice characteristic of the other, but implies that each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian Faith.<sup>31</sup>

All the Old Catholic Churches of Europe accepted the Born Agreement soon after the meeting, and the Polish Church in America in 1946. Churches of the Anglican Communion

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<sup>31</sup>Koss, The Old Catholic Movement, p. 348.

churches ratified the agreement over the next few years. The agreement assumed that there would be mutual assistance in the consecration of bishops.

The 13th International Old Catholic Congress was held in September 1934 in Constance, scene of much important history for Old Catholicism. An American observer said that this congress "... displayed a vigor, evinced an ecumenical outlook, and manifested an aggressive policy which bid fair to achieve a new era for Old Catholicism."<sup>32</sup> He saw the Old Catholics shaking off the lethargy which had taken hold after the war, and saw a greatly improved future ahead. World War II was to come shortly, and place the Old Catholic Church in the most perilous situation in which it had ever found itself.

In 1937 there was an exchange of greetings between the Old Catholic Bishop of Germany, Erwin Kreuzer, and Reichsfuhrer Adolf Hitler. The bishop pledged the loyalty of the Old Catholic Church to the government and its program, and indeed, its complete support. It appears that there was no conflict between Old Catholicism and the Third Reich, and there was a tightly-organized and strong Catholic National Church Movement, which found the government aiding the Old Catholic program. Old Catholic parishes sprang up in formerly weak areas, and large accessions were made. Roman Catholics

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<sup>32</sup>Frank Gavin, "The Old Catholic Congress," The Living Church, ACF (29 September 1934), p. 391.

and other German Christians were highly critical of the National movement, considering it a well-timed proselytizing movement with the purpose "... of insinuating themselves into the good graces of the Nazi regime."<sup>33</sup>

Christians outside Germany were very disturbed to hear of the Old Catholic support of the Nazi regime, and the general consensus was that the German Church was playing once more the role as the pawn of the government, just as in the days of Bismarck's Kulturkampf. The Nationalism and Socialism of the Nazi regime were finding political support from Old Catholic leaders.

When the National Catholic Church Movement met in Mannheim in May 1937, there was little doubt but that the Old Catholic Church was a pawn of the government. Roman Catholics were told that it was impossible for them to be patriotic Germans and to hold their faith, and large numbers of them were convinced by this propaganda. The movement was described by one priest as the "... 'shock-troops' of a re-awakened Old Catholicism in the fatherland."<sup>34</sup>

While Roman Catholics and Protestants opposed the Nazi program on the whole, Bishop Kreuzer sent out pastoral letters urging his people to "... pray for the Fuehrer, that God may

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<sup>33</sup>Anton A. Mueller, "Old Catholicism and the German State," The Living Church, XCVI (20 March 1937), p. 364.

<sup>34</sup>Anton A. Mueller, "Old Catholic Group Meets in Mannheim," The Living Church, XCVI (26 June 1937), p. 820.

grant him courage and wisdom, and to all his collaborators loyalty and prudence, and perseverance and fortitude to each and every fighter."<sup>35</sup>

The German Old Catholic approach was not that of Old Catholicism as a whole. The Swiss and Dutch Old Catholics were very much opposed to the attitude of their German brethren, and indeed there were German Old Catholics who did not endorse it. Dr. Urs Kury, present bishop of Switzerland, wrote in the January-March issue, 1939, of the leading Old Catholic journal, Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift, that the philosophy of the Nazi Old Catholics could not be held by any sincere Catholic Christian. The great fear of non-German Old Catholics was that the Church in Germany might completely lose her Christianity.

Under the decree of the Third Reich the Old Catholic Churches in Austria and the Sudetenland were made part of the German Church. All German-speaking Old Catholics, except the Swiss, were knit together in the Third Reich. For the Austrian Old Catholics the Anschluss was a deliverance, for they had long been under Roman Catholic suppression. The parishes in the Sudetenland had been under the supervision of the Czech Church, centered in Prague. The diocese was primarily a German-speaking area, with only a few Czech parishes.

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<sup>35</sup>The Living Church, CI (8 November 1939), p. 12.

under Bishop Paschek, a Czech himself. The majority of the Old Catholics of the diocese were not unhappy with the action of the government.

The Churches in Holland, Germany and Poland suffered severely during the conflict. A Dutch priest in Rotterdam was killed as his church was destroyed by the German attack in May 1940. Almost all Old Catholic churches in Germany were destroyed by Allied bombs. The Polish Church was almost devastated by the mass deportation of the population carried out by the Germans. The Swiss Church proved to be the great helper during the war, giving aid where possible, and keeping some measure of communication between the Churches of the Utrecht Union.

As the war neared its end, untold losses had been suffered by the European Old Catholics. The Dutch Church participated in the effort to save the Jews from persecution, and many Dutch Old Catholics spent time in German concentration camps as a result. German Old Catholics were hurt not only by destroyed churches, but also by the calling of the younger clergy into military service. By March 1945 it was assumed by outsiders that the Old Catholic Churches in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Croatia were completely destroyed.

After the war ended, the German Church found itself in a desperate situation, with a vast portion of the members scattered. The Church in Bohemia was almost completely

wiped out. The Czech Church had not been completely destroyed as had been feared, but was greatly hurt by the denotation of German-speaking Old Catholics from the diocese. The problem in Czechoslovakia was compounded at this time by the death of Bishop Paschek. The prevailing notion was that the Old Catholic Church was doomed, but through the efforts of the Swiss Church and the aid of the American Episcopal Church, the Churches were reconstructed materially and spiritually.

Despite the losses, the Old Catholic Churches made amazingly quick recovery. The Austrian Church in 1947 had twelve parishes and 33 mission stations, and was retaining former strength. There were other changes in Austria, in other areas. Formerly very antagonistic toward Roman Catholicism, a more positive approach was taken by the Old Catholics and an ecumenical institute was established.

The Old Catholic Church in Yugoslavia could locate only 10,000 faithful after the war, although there had been some 50,000 before. Churches had been seized and destroyed and several thousand Old Catholics were compelled to conform to the Roman Church.

In 1944 there were 4000 members, in eight parishes, in the Old Catholic Church in Croatia, which is in communion with Utrecht. In May 1965 a conference was held in Belgrade of the Bishops of Yugoslav Old Catholic Churches, of which there are now three. A Union of Old Catholic Churches of

Yugoslavia was formed, with the participating members being the Rt. Rev. Milar Dobrovoljac of the Old Catholic Church in Serbia; the Rt. Rev. Antor Kovocevic, bishop of the Old Catholic Slavonic Church; and the Rt. Rev. Vilim Kuzjak of the Old Catholic Croatian Church. The declaration of these three churches said that the bishops will keep in touch as to questions of faith and order, and when complications arise, they will try to find a solution in accordance with the principles of the Churches belonging to the Union of Utrecht. The bishops also agreed not to enter into agreements with other churches, such matters being decided only by the Union.

The Church in Holland experienced growth following the war, with almost 14,000 members reported in 1947. The churches destroyed were rebuilt, and several new parishes and mission stations were established. The seminary at Amersfoort, a very respected institution, was active once again.

Before the war the Old Catholic Church in Holland had done almost nothing to win converts to its faith - from Rome or the Reformed Churches, or even from non-Church members. There has been more of an effort to acquaint the Dutch people with the claims of their Church in recent years.

The Dutch Old Catholic Church has felt the effects of the liturgical movement. The people have increasingly been



brought into the life and work of the Church. Although the Dutch Church was the last Old Catholic body to put the Mass into the vernacular, doing so in 1909, emphasis has been given in recent years to participation in the Mass. Reception of communion in both kinds has gradually become the norm.

The Dutch liturgy follows the Roman Mass more closely than do most Old Catholic liturgies. The use of rosaries, scapulars and medals is discouraged, and public processions and pilgrimages are rare today. Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament are found in some parishes.<sup>36</sup>

The 15th International Congress of Old Catholics met at Hilversum, Holland, in September 1948. The theme of the meeting was the Old Catholic place in ecumenical discussion. The Archbishop of Utrecht, Andreas Rinkel, was concerned that the Old Catholics be in the ecumenical picture, and that their position be clarified for the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches. He expressed the hope that the World Council would encompass as many churches as possible, and indicated the intention of the Old Catholics to join.

As an official representative of the Protestant Episcopal Church, an American bishop described this first Old Catholic congress held since 1938. He sensed the significance of the various national Churches meeting together once again.

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<sup>36</sup>N.P. Williams and Charles Harris, (edit.) Northern Catholicism (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), P. 543.

Unity in the Faith transcended racial barriers. Yet there was no false sentimentality. Bishop Steinwachs spoke of their position in Germany .... Conditions were terrible. Professor van Kleef replying said they in Holland had not forgotten what they had suffered at the hands of the Germans .... 'Yet we can receive you as a friend and brother in the Faith.' These two Christians spoke with courage and dignity.... We saw a union of sister-Churches all looking to Utrecht as their spiritual center, bound together not by the ties of race, language and sentiment, but by the ties of Catholic Tradition, Order and Liturgy ....<sup>37</sup>

When Pope Pius XII promulgated the doctrine of the Assumption of Mary during 1950, the Old Catholic bishops responded with an official statement. It was not so much the particular dogma which offended the bishops as it was the fact that the pope defined it ex cathedra. After several positive statements affirming the Catholic and Apostolic Faith as they understood it, the bishops said:

We reject anew the doctrine that the Bishop of Rome should be able to pronounce, to establish and prescribe infallibly as divine truth to the Church that, which God has revealed, even were such a doctrine not confirmed in Holy writ nor universally confessed by the Church.

And ... we reject once more the doctrine of 'the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin Mary' pronounced by the Bishop of Rome and at the present day we also reject the doctrine established and announced by him on All Saints day 1950 of the bodily Assumption of the Holy Virgin into heavenly Glory.

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<sup>37</sup>Farwood Sturtevant, "International Old Catholic Congress Meets at Wilversum," The Living Church, CXVII (10 October 1948), p. 17.

We regret that by this new dogma the Church of Rome has again distanced itself another step from the truth which is only from God and that because of this the break in Christianity, striving after reunion is again divided.

In communion with the Church of all ages we observe the commemoration of the Holy Virgin, Mother of our Redeemer, of the Patriarchs and the Prophets, the Apostles and all the Saints upon whom God has bestowed the crown of eternal life and we pray God, who by His Holy Ghost sanctifies and guides the whole body of the Church, to hear the intercessions of this His Church triumphant and take away from the Church militant all error, to make the light of the truth to shine upon her and grant her the gifts of Unity and Peace through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.<sup>38</sup>

The 16th International Old Catholic Congress was scheduled for September 1952 in Vienna. Various Old Catholic groups withdrew in protest against some remarks made by a Father Barejska, the secretary for Foreign Relations of the Austrian Old Catholic Church. Father Barejska had attended a Church Peace Meeting in the Soviet Union, and made some comments showing a sympathy for Communism, which forced the Old Catholic bodies to refrain from participating, and caused the cancellation of the congress.

The 16th Congress was held in Aurich in September 1953. The meeting consisted of a conference of the clergy to discuss theological problems surrounding the sacrament of penance. The conference reaffirmed the position of Old Catholicism that this sacrament may be received in private confession

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<sup>38</sup>"Old Catholics and the Assumption," The Living Church, CXXII (1 April 1951), pp. 7, 8.

or in common confession as used in Old Catholic churches. Archbishop Rinkel, addressing the congress on ecumenicity and Old Catholicism, said that the Old Catholic Churches are the Catholic Churches of their countries as the Church of England is the Catholic Church of England. Apostolic orders are the esse of the Church.

The Old Catholics held their 17th International Congress in September 1957 in Rheinfelden, Switzerland. The meeting emphasized the necessity for each member of the Church to accept the missionary responsibility which is his as a Christian. A concern was expressed for the prayer life of Old Catholic families, and work was begun on a prayer book for family use. The need was recognized for making the Old Catholic Church better known among other communions and in the world. For the first time the possibility was raised of starting missionary work in a non-Christian area, perhaps cooperating with an Anglican missionary society. As a result of this congress the Old Catholic Mission of Saint Paul began its work in the Anglican diocese of Saint John's, Kapraria, South Africa, in 1959. Initially a project of the Swiss Old Catholics, the German Church joined in 1960.

The Archbishop of Canterbury made a strong appeal in 1961, at the 18th Congress in Haarlem, for closer fellowship between Old Catholics, Orthodox and Anglicans. He said that Anglicans wished to move with Old Catholics toward eventual

reunion with the Orthodox. Archbishop Rinkel announced that the Old Catholics were prepared to resume discussions looking toward mutual recognition between Old Catholics and Orthodox. Since the conferences headed by Böllinger, Old Catholics and Orthodox have met from time to time, and a large measure of doctrinal agreement has been reached. Except for an occasional joint-service, there has been little in the way of practical results.

Speaking to an ecumenical gathering in Zeist, Holland in September 1963, the Primate of the Old Catholic Churches commented on the developments taking place in the Roman Church.

What the Roman Catholic Church pursues today in many of her leaders, knowledge and reading of the Scriptures, use of the vernacular in the celebration of the Eucharist, revision of her canonical laws, purification of her devotion, greater independence of the episcopal government, activating of the lay world, etc. -- these are all factors that our Church has realized long since but for which in former days she was condemned as being heretic and schismatic.<sup>39</sup>

The Archbishop went on to say that the real way to unity cannot be the way of compromise, "... but only the way of identification with the Church which has carried through the ages the sacred heritage of the Lord and His Apostles, undiminished, unaugmented, untainted but always better elucidated by the thinking, believing, living and praying of those who call upon the Lord."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>H. Karl Lutze, The American Church News, LXX (December 1963), p. 13.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

The most recent International Old Catholic Congress was held in Vienna in September 1965. The main theme of the meeting dealt with the position of Old Catholicism in the ecumenical movement, particularly in light of Vatican II. Twenty Old Catholic bishops attending the congress, without two Polish bishops who were denied travel permits, welcomed the first Roman Catholic official observer ever to attend an Old Catholic meeting. Over 400 delegates from seventeen nations were present at the conference.

Before the congress opened, the International Conference of Old Catholic Bishops, and the ranking bishops of three other Churches - the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church, the Lusitanian Church of Portugal, and the Philippine Independent Catholic Church - signed a formal agreement of full communion. Announcement was made as the congress opened of the agreement which permits members of the participating Churches to take full part in the sacraments as was permitted by the Bonn Agreement of 1931. These are the first Churches outside the Anglican Communion with which the Old Catholics have entered an intercommunion arrangement.

### Chapter III

The largest Old Catholic body in communion with Utrecht, and the only American Church acknowledged as Old Catholic by the Utrecht Union, is the Polski Narodowy Katolicki Kościół w Ameryce - the Polish National Catholic Church in America. Beginning as an independent Catholic body among Polish immigrants in the United States, the group later became affiliated with the European Old Catholics under the Archbishop of Utrecht.

The Polish immigrants to America had largely been of the peasantry rather than the intelligentsia. They had considered the Church

a Polish institution, standing for the unity of Polish religion and the aspirations of Polish nationalism, as the sole bond uniting an otherwise scattered and divided people. This aspect had been emphasized by their Church leaders....<sup>41</sup>

The Poles could have applied the term "national" - narodowy - to the Roman Catholic Church in their country, as they knew it; for that term would have conveyed all the overtones of national aspiration and hope which it was helping them to realize.

The Poles coming to the United States suffered a rude awakening, for the Roman Church they found was dominated by men who knew little and cared less about Poland's history

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<sup>41</sup>Theodore Andrews, The Polish National Catholic Church (London: S.P.C.K., 1953), p. 15.

ard hopes. They found little that was familiar to them; the Church was certainly not their Church as they had known it. They were to have no voice in choosing their parish priests, and no power over their parish property.

There were at least three movements toward ecclesiastical independence among the Poles in America between 1895 and 1900, each independent of the others but brought about by the same causes.

The first group of Poles to break with Rome was led by the Reverend Antoni Stanislas Kozlowski, assistant pastor of Saint Jadwiga's Roman Catholic Church in Chicago. Feeling the restlessness of his people under unsympathetic non-Polish leaders, Father Kozlowski organized the independent parish of All Saints in January 1895. The parish grew, built a church building, and was soon joined by other independent congregations. Father Kozlowski was elected bishop by the parishes, and was consecrated in Jerr, Switzerland on 13 November 1897, by Bishop Herzog of Switzerland, Archbishop Gul of Utrecht, and Bishop Peter of Bonn.

The episcopate of Bishop Kozlowski covered a period of ten years, during which he organized some twenty-five parishes. His group was called the Polish Old Catholic Church, and he maintained a close relationship with the European Old Catholics. The constitution and articles of faith of this Church conformed with the faith of the Creeds and the councils



Before the great schism. Bishop Grafton of the Episcopal diocese of Ford du Lac favorably received Bishop Kozlowski, and both worked for intercommunion between the Churches.

Bishop Kozlowski died on 14 January 1907, without having consecrated any other bishops. After his death the clergy and people of the Chicago area voted to unite with the Polish congregations organized under the title, Polish National Catholic Church.

Another independent Polish movement arose in Buffalo, New York, at the same time as the Chicago break. Saint Adalbert's parish was involved in a struggle with the hierarchy over property control. After riots and considerable strife, parishioners who wanted control started their own parish, Mother of the Holy Rosary, holding their first services on 8 August 1895. The parish grew rapidly, building a large church and parochial school. Father Stanislas Kaminski was called to be the priest, and was chosen bishop-elect.

Kaminski was consecrated by Joseph Here Vilatte (see Chapter IV), an episcopus vagans, who had been consecrated by a Syrian Jacobite bishop. Kaminski was to be suffragan to Vilatte, with charge over the Polish Catholics, although his diocese consisted only of the large Buffalo parish. After Kaminski's death in September 1911, the parish went through some extensive legal battles with the Roman Catholic diocese over the control of the property, finally winning the case

in August 1915. The Kaminski Polish Catholics united with the Polish National Catholics in 1914, and in June 1928 the Mother of the Holy Rosary church was made the cathedral for the Buffalo-Pittsburgh diocese.

The third independent movement among the Poles, the largest and most vigorous, was the Polish National Catholic Church. This group is the only considerable body in the United States to have broken with the Roman Church. In using the term "national" the Polish Catholics claim that their Church is the appropriate one for the Polish people in America and in the homeland "... to express their national feelings religiously."<sup>42</sup>

The Polish National Church began in Scranton, Pennsylvania, a large center of Polish coal-miners and factory-workers. In late 1896 members of Sacred Heart of Jesus Polish Roman Catholic Church requested that they be given representation in the management of parish affairs. Their Polish pastor refused, and they received as well a severe rebuke from their Irish bishop. Matters grew worse, eventually resulting in a small riot in front of the church.<sup>43</sup>

A former priest of the Sacred Heart parish, Father Francis Godur, offered counsel to the people of the Scranton church. He was imbued with the rationalistic spirit, and

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>43</sup> Paul Fox, The Polish National Catholic Church (Scranton, Pennsylvania: School of Christian Living, 1957), p. 23.

found himself very sympathetic with these people. He encouraged the building of a new church which would remain in the possession of the people. There was no move as yet to leave the Roman Church. When the church was built the Polish dissidents called Father Kodur to be their spiritual leader. He took charge of Saint Stanislas parish on 14 March 1897, and celebrated the next Sunday the first Mass in the church which was to be the center of a wide-spread movement. There were about 250 families in the new parish. The new church building was consecrated by Kodur on 4 July 1897, and the influence of the parish grew. The Roman Catholic diocese was, quite naturally, very hostile, and began a drive to keep the Polish people in the Roman Church.

Father Kodur went to Rome in 1898, feeling that the American hierarchy was in error concerning the property issue. He was told that it was not possible for an exception to be made concerning this matter. His excommunication notice, and that of his parish, arrived in the United States soon after he returned home. The resistance of most of the congregation was increased, although a few returned to Roman obedience.

The Roman Catholics published Polish magazines and called in religious orders to help prevent further schism. The quick and effective action of Rome slowed the growth of the independent movement. Also detrimental to the National

Church was the calibre of priests. All had been trained in Roman seminaries and many were not endowed with the mental acumen or stability needed particularly at this crucial time.

Saint Stanislas parish assembly in December 1900 decided on a definite break with the Roman Church in matters of faith and worship, as well as in organization. The Polish language was adopted for all services, and the first Polish Mass was celebrated at Christmas that year.

Father Hodur called a synod of the various congregations in September 1904, at which the several independent parishes were consolidated under the name Polish National Catholic Church, with a total membership of 20,000. The 150 delegates drew up the constitution of the newly formed Church; ordered the translation of the Latin service-books into Polish; and repudiated the claims of the Roman Church. By vote of the synod, Father Hodur was elected bishop-elect and named administrator of the Church. Archbishop Gul of Utrecht consecrated Father Hodur at Saint Gertrude's Cathedral in Utrecht on Michaelmas 1907, assisted by Bishop van Thiel of Haarlem and Bishop Spitt of Deventer.

With the accessions of the Koklowski and Kominski congregations, the Polish Church grew. There were congregations in New London, Connecticut, and Manchester, New Hampshire, which came into the Polish Church with their priests. Some groups came without priests, while a number of priests came

individually. A reform movement was started among the Lithuanians in 1914 in Pennsylvania, forming the Lithuanian National Catholic Church. This group is part of the Polish Church and is not under Polish episcopal supervision.

In 1919 Father Bronislas Krupski was sent to Poland to see the possibility of establishing a Polish Mission there. He found the prospects encouraging and by 1922 the work had progressed to the point where a bishop, Francis Bonczak, was sent to supervise the Church there. Bishop Bonczak took several clergy to assist with the growing work in Poland from the American Church. Bitter opposition of the Roman Church made the establishment of new National parishes difficult in some cases.<sup>44</sup>

The fourth General Synod was held in Scranton in 1921. The meeting gave approval to the consecration of assistant bishops to be consecrated by Prime Bishop Kodur. It also granted official approval to clerical marriage, subject to the consent of the bishop. There was some opposition on the part of the laity, but they finally voted approval. Few priests availed themselves of the privilege for some time because of lay sentiments. The present Prime Bishop is a married man and more than half his clergy are also married. Because of very strong feelings in Poland, few of the National priests there have taken wives.

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., pp. 41-63.

The four priests elected at the 1921 synod were consecrated by Bishop Modur without any co-consecrators. He has been criticized for performing the consecrations alone, but it was either this or send the four to Europe for the Old Catholics there to perform them. Bonczak was sent to Poland; Cawrychowski to New England; Grochowski to Chicago; and Griteras was given responsibility for the Lithuanians.

Not all the members of the Polish National Church have been Polish. A few Italian congregations have affiliated, continuing to hold services in Latin or Italian. In 1925 a large group of Slovak Roman Catholics in Passaic, New Jersey, left the Roman Church. They were approached by the Czechoslovak Orthodox Church, but decided to affiliate with the Polish National Catholics since their traditional rite was Latin. A strong parish still exists. Other Slovak parishes have joined the Polish Church in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The Polish Church made no attempt to bring these groups into their Church, for they have not extended their work outside the Polish population. They were sought out by these other groups. Recently the Polish Church has been cooperating with the Puerto Rican National Catholic Church, headed by a Father Hector Gonzalez. Prime Bishop Grochowski confirmed almost 300 members of this body in 1961.

There are several factors which distinguish the Polish Church from other Old Catholic members of the Utrecht Union. The rites and ceremonies resemble much more closely those of

Roman Catholicism than is the case with European Old Catholicism. The liturgical movement has had very little influence among the Polish Catholics, whereas the European Churches anticipated the liturgical renewal with some of their revisions.

Litanies and devotions, such as Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, are popular and generally the same as those found in the Roman Church. The Poles retain the devotion to the Sacred Heart, which the European Old Catholics have abandoned and indeed oppose, because of its introduction by the Jesuits during the struggle over the Church of Utrecht. Many Polish National Churches bear the name "Sacred Heart."

The calendar which is followed is largely the Roman, although several special feasts have been added. Two of these are particularly nationalistic: The Feast of the Polish National Catholic Church and the Feast of Remembrance of the Dear Polish Fatherland. Other commemorations are made of Polish religious reformers and patriots.<sup>45</sup>

The use of the Polish language in the services is a basic principle, and is insisted upon by the doctrinal works of the Church. This would certainly be consistent with the Old Catholic principle of the liturgy in the vernacular. In recent years, seminarians in this country have had to learn

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<sup>45</sup> Andrews, The Polish National Catholic Church, p. 60.

Polish in order to prepare for the priesthood, and fewer and fewer of the second and third-generation Polish Catholics speak the language. The move to use English in the mass and other services was very much opposed by some Polish Nationals. The general synod in 1946 authorized the supplanting of the Polish language by English when the switch is approved by a majority vote in each parish. In recent years the main Masses in many parishes have been celebrated in English while some of the other Masses remain in Polish.

Unlike other Old Catholic Churches the Polish Church considers the preaching of the word as one of the seven sacraments, combining baptism and confirmation to keep the traditional number. This is due to the great influence of Bishop Hodur, who had some peculiar notions of his own.

The writings of Bishop Hodur are still quite authoritative in the Polish Church, although recent Church publications have been more in line with conventional Anglican and Old Catholic thought. The Confession of Faith or Credo, drawn up by the Bishop, was adopted by the Church in 1913. The Credo is read in church eight times annually and is subscribed to at confirmation.

The faithful are instructed to read and ponder the Scriptures, and to interpret them according to their conscience. The general synod has the authority to interpret the Scriptures for the Polish Church, placing the Church in



the role of clarifier and interpreter.

Bishop Hodur seems to have had a thorough-going pragmatism regarding other religious bodies.

The leaders of the Polish National Catholic Church are of the opinion that before God and before America, all beliefs, all sects, are equal. If God did not wish a certain sect to exist, (He) would not give it the necessary powers to exist and develop. Likewise, if something (i.e., a religious body) exists, acts, and progresses, it has the right to exist in God and through God.<sup>46</sup>

The Polish Church has received some criticism of the explicit universalism apparent in its teachings. The bishops of the Church have said that universal salvation is taught as an opinion since it has never been condemned, although it was not held by a majority of the Fathers.

Great reverence is given the Blessed Virgin, as can be seen by the many churches dedicated to Saint Mary, Mother of the Rosary, the Sorrowful Mother, and even the Immaculate Conception. There is no defined doctrine of the mediation of Mary in heaven. In addition the saints are invoked "... because of the worthiness of the intercessions for men of those who ever stand in the presence of God."<sup>47</sup>

Later statements by Church leaders have reflected a more orthodox view of the Church and Church doctrine. The Credo of Bishop Hodur is now seen as supplementing rather

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 54, 55.

than supplanting the historic creeds. The ideas of the first prime bishop were not so much

statements of a theologian as homilies of a crusading priest, eager to stir his people to action, and indignant at the pretensions of an alien hierarchy.<sup>48</sup>

A "Short Catechism" appeared in 1936 with the imprimatur of Bishop Hodur, and this clear and simple work is quite acceptable to orthodox Christians.

Although Bishop Hodur had tried to foster closer relations between the Polish National Church and the Episcopal Church for many years, he had little success until 1946. The Protestant Episcopalians had ratified the Bonn Agreement in 1940 at General Convention. In 1946 the synod of the Polish Church approved the Agreement allowing full intercommunion between American Episcopalians and Polish Catholics. The basis for this arrangement would be the same as that of the Bonn Agreement. This was a particularly significant action for the United States was the only country where large numbers of Anglicans and Old Catholics live in the same communities. Here was the opportunity for full fellowship and communion between the Churches.

A joint committee of theologians was appointed by the two bodies to supervise the intercommunion. For a time the Polish Church insisted that it was permissible for a

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

Polish Catholic to receive the sacraments in the Episcopal Church, or vice versa, only in the case of emergency or with express permission of the bishop. This clause received some criticism from European Old Catholic bishops, as it did also from some American Episcopalians, and later was modified. It was pointed out that the relationship "... is the sacramental communion of two autonomous Churches, each respecting the independence and jurisdiction of the other, and avoiding any action which might tend to weaken the loyalty of those in its sister Church ...."<sup>49</sup>

Since the establishment of intercommunion, Polish National bishops have participated in several consecrations of Protestant Episcopal bishops, and likewise Episcopal bishops have taken part in Polish consecrations. Several Polish seminarians have studied in Episcopal seminaries, and the late Bishop Jasinski of Buffalo was trained in one. An Episcopal priest was a lecturer at one time at the Polish Savonarola Seminary in Scranton, in the history of American religion.

Bishop Godur died on 16 February 1953 at the age of 86, the prime bishop up to his death. Although blind and in poor health he continued to play an active role in the affairs of the Church to the last. The Episcopal Church paid tribute to Bishop Godur and his work among his people. The

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<sup>49</sup>The Living Church, CAV (10 August 1947), p. 8.

retired bishop of Albany, Bishop Oldham, said that the "... motive which created both the Anglican Communion and the Polish National Catholic Church is the same."<sup>50</sup> While this statement is debatable, there have been certain similarities in the development of the two Churches in their struggle to be free National Churches.

Indicative of the more orthodox position of the Polish Church since the death of Bishop Hodur are cases where two priests have been rebuked for heterodox opinions. In 1955 Prime Bishop Crochowski asked for the resignation of the Reverend Joseph Aler, a former Roman Catholic priest. Father Aler was pastor of the Holy Name parish in South Deerfield, Massachusetts, and he had become very vocal in his support of certain Unitarian ideas. His growing unorthodoxy led him out of the Polish Church into the Unitarian fold, and he took a number of his parishioners with him.

The Reverend Albert Sarka, pastor of Saint Joseph's parish, Westfield, Massachusetts, writing in the 5 January 1957 issue of Rola Boza, a Polish Church weekly, said:

It is one thing to say that God worked through Jesus or, God was in Jesus, and quite another to say that Jesus was God! ....

If, in defiance to his words, in outrage to his own soul, men say that Jesus was Infinite Deity all the time, then his life becomes a mere pantomime ....

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<sup>50</sup> The Living Church, LXVIII (14 March 1953), p. 6.

To think thus of the life of Christ is to make a puzzle of it, it is to take away all of its power to inspire us. Jesus never indulged in make-believe. He was what He claimed to be: a servant of God, a humble child of the Eternal Father, who followed God's call and nobly died in obeying it ....<sup>51</sup>

The remarks of Father Tarka drew the response of the Prime Bishop in the same weekly soon thereafter. Speaking as head of the Polish Church, Bishop Grochowski addressed Father Tarka and those who agreed with him:

In reference to certain statements made by the Rev. Albert Tarka in his article ... I hereby make the following official announcement as Prime Bishop ....

Holy Scripture and Apostolic Tradition as expressed in the Creeds of the four Ecumenical Councils constitute the Basis of Doctrine and Teachings of the Polish National Catholic Church. Our beloved Organizer and Prime Bishop, Francis Hodur, emphasized over and over again, that our Church is Trinitarian in Creed and centers on the Person of Jesus Christ as the Divine Saviour of mankind and the second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

The denial of Christ's Divinity in the Rev. A. Tarka's article ... represents the personal opinion of the author -- and in no way does it reflect the basic Doctrine of the Polish National Catholic Church.

All clergymen, in accordance with their solemn vows made at the time of their ordination, and in accordance with the nature of their faculties delegated to them by their Bishops, as pastors of particular Parishes must faithfully teach their 'flock' the Doctrines of the Polish National Catholic Church; to do otherwise subjects them to disciplinary action by their Bishop

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<sup>51</sup>The Living Church, CXXXIV (31 March 1957), p. 10.

Ordinary or by the Prime Bishop, according to the provisions of the Constitution of the Polish National Catholic Church.<sup>52</sup>

Under Bishop Modur it is likely that Fathers Allen and Tarka could have been allowed to continue their ministries in the Polish Church.

From its entrance into Poland in 1922 up until 1950, the Polish Church grew rapidly, with membership estimates ranging from 100,000 to 500,000. In December 1950 the Communist government cut off the foreign support of the Church and arrested in January 1951 the bishop, Joseph Padewski. The government called a convention of all non-Roman and non-Orthodox clergy to work out the formation of a united Church of Poland, composed of National Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Mariavites and others. Only a small percentage of the 300 clergy attended the meeting.

Bishop Padewski died in May 1951 in the Warsaw prison. United States embassy officials were not permitted to view his body, although Church officials were allowed to conduct a funeral. After the bishop's death two other bishops were consecrated without authority from the Polish National Church. Many of the original Polish Catholics resigned from this new Church, which completely severed relations with the Polish National Church with headquarters in Scranton.

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<sup>52</sup>Id.

In 1957 relations were restored between the American and Polish Churches when the Rt. Rev. Julian Bekalo, Bishop of Poland, visited the United States. The visit was returned by Prime Bishop Grochowski in the autumn of 1957, and he participated in the synod of the Polish Church.

The Communist government has favored the Polish Church in recent years. The Gomulka regime has imposed a 65% tax on the income of the Roman Catholic Church and other "private associations," retroactive for ten years. At the same time the government has defined the Polish National Church as a "public association" and therefore exempt from the tax.<sup>53</sup> The attitude of the government toward the Polish Church is quite reminiscent of Bismarck's treatment of the Old Catholics of his day.

The Church in Poland is apparently prospering. Prime Bishop Grochowski, accompanied by Bishop Francis Rowinski of Chicago, visited Poland in early 1966, at the invitation of the National Church there. Several new churches have been built and new missions have been started. There are a few ordinations each year and several Roman Catholic priests are received annually.

The Polish National Catholic Church is like the Old

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<sup>53</sup>William Woelen, Faiths for the Few (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1963), p. 116.

Catholic groups in that it too is a "Latin" Catholic body, having certain features peculiar to itself. It is not unfair to say that the Polish Church has, to a large extent, been preoccupied with its struggle against the Roman Church. The hatred for Roman Catholicism is deep, although it has been somewhat tempered since Vatican II. The Most Reverend Thaddeus F. Zieliński, the American-born Bishop of the Buffalo-Pittsburgh diocese, hailed the changes being accomplished in the Roman Church. In his comments he, not unexpectedly, made some comparisons with the Polish Church.

We Polish National Catholics are not isolated any more. Many things we introduced are being accepted by the Roman Catholics, among them the use of native languages in the mass, returning of rights to the laity, utilization of both men and women in the church and recognition of freedom of conscience.<sup>54</sup>

About one in seventeen of the five and a half million Poles in the United States are members of the Polish Church. The membership covers a cross-section of the Polish population, with factory-workers and miners and the elite of Polish society. There are an estimated 300,000 members in the United States and Canada. The importance of this Church is not in its numerical strength but in the way it has focused on Polish nationalism because the Roman Church failed to do so.

The theology of the Polish Church has not always been

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<sup>54</sup>New York Times (December 1965).



clear or consistent, but the leading organizer took care to secure episcopal orders from the respected European Old Catholics. There has been the usual lag between the efforts of portions of the Church to keep it always the same and the segments pushing for changes. Although with a long way yet to go, the Polish National Catholic Church is becoming less Polish and more Catholic.

## Chapter IV

Hooker, in his Ecclesiastical Polity, says that

Bishops, being principal pastors, are either at large or else with restraint; at large, when the subject of their regiment is indefinite and not tied to a certain place. Bishops with restraint are they whose regiment over the Church is contained within some definite local compass, beyond which compass their jurisdiction reacheth not.<sup>55</sup>

The most serious weakness of Old Catholic organization, in the midst of well-organized synods and careful lay control, is the problem of choosing bishops. Because each national church is self-governing under the terms of the Utrecht Declaration, it is difficult for foreign bishops to determine if a candidate is suitable for his office, and it is not easy to reject him. It is most difficult to deal with a bishop who has been found unsuited for his office.

There have been several cases of schism among the European Old Catholics and the Polish National Catholics. Old Catholicism has been the victim of defecting bishops, and the Church as a whole has been harmed by the activities of these bishops and their successors, of whom there are many. The Old Catholic Churches of the Utrecht Union have exercised considerably more caution in the consecration of bishops in recent years.

The best known case, and the one with the most far-

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Richard Hooker, Ecclesiastical Polity, Book VII.

reaching effects, is that of Bishop Arnold Harris Mathew. Born in 1856, he was baptized as a child, in the Roman and Anglican Communions, foreshadowing his oscillation between the two Churches in later life. He studied in an Anglican theological college, but left and was received into the Roman Church and ordained a priest at Glasgow, 24 June 1877. After some time as a priest of several parishes, Mathew became influenced by Unitarianism and resigned his post, retiring into private life. He was excommunicated by Rome in 1889.

Shaking Unitarianism, he found work in the Church of England, serving unofficially in a London parish. He was married in 1892 in an Anglican church, and tried to have his marriage recognized by Rome so he could be a married layman, but Rome refused. He remained in retirement until 1907, when he applied to Archbishop Davidson, of Canterbury, for an incumbency in the Church of England. The Archbishop stipulated that Mathew must work under probation and supervisor before such a nomination could even be considered. Mathew preferred to let the matter drop in this case. The Archbishop did not rule out the possibility of reversing this request.

In late 1907 Mathew was approached by several disenchanted Roman Catholic priests who encouraged him to consider assisting in the founding of an Old Catholic Mission in England. Mathew's part in this movement seems to have been above all

reproach, as is indicated by a letter to Archbishop Davidsox:

I think that a way to serve the Church of England as une eglise amie may be open to me, which will also, I hope, help forward the movement of Re-union of those Churches, which reject the modern Papal pretensions. I have been approached within the past few days by several Roman Catholics who wish to embrace the tenets of the Old Catholic Communities of Germany and Switzerland and have implored me to assist them. If this can be done in harmony and friendship with the Established Church I think a sphere of very useful labour is thus unexpectedly presenting itself, one also which it may be my duty to enter upon ....<sup>56</sup>

Kathew was informed shortly thereafter that he had been elected bishop of the proposed Old Catholic Church of England. He went to Holland, presenting the request for consecration to the Archbishop of Utrecht. There was little investigation of Kathew by the Old Catholic bishops, and plans were made for his consecration. The day before the service was to have taken place, it was discovered that Kathew was married. The Old Catholics, at this time, had never had any married bishops, and did not in principle oppose having them. They were, however, concerned that Kathew might possibly have left the Roman Church in order to marry. The consecration was postponed, but the bishops were soon convinced that this had not been the case. Kathew was consecrated in Saint Gertrude's Cathedral in Utrecht on 28 April 1900, by Archbishop Gul, assisted by the bishops of Haarlem and Deventer, and Bishop

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<sup>56</sup>G.A.A. Bell, Randall Davidsox, II (New York: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 1017.

Bennet of Garrary.

Bishop Mathew returned to England, and found that he had been misled concerning the numbers of priests and people who were desirous of an English Old Catholic Church. He offered to resign, but the Dutch Bishops refused his offer. He was a bishop without a flock, as many of his successors would also prove to be. On 12 October 1909 Bishop Mathew participated in the consecration of the first Polish Mariavite Bishop at Utrecht (see below).

The Lambeth Conference of 1908 had passed a resolution deploring the setting up of a body "... in regions where a Church with apostolic ministry and Catholic doctrine offers religious privileges without the imposition of uncatholic terms of communion, more especially in cases where no difference of language or nationality exists."<sup>57</sup> The Archbishop of Canterbury had made it quite clear that he thought there was no need of an Old Catholic Church in England since the Church of England was the Catholic Church there. In June 1910 Mathew issued a public statement denying the validity of Anglican orders. The Dutch Bishops responded by saying that Mathew, while in full communion with them, was independent and spoke only for himself.

On 12 June 1910 Bishop Mathew secretly consecrated

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 1010.

two Roman Catholic priests, who had been at odds with Rome since the title of Monsignor had been denied them. Mathew later gave as his reason for the consecrations his desire to maintain the succession in England. In December 1910 the Oud Katholiek, published by the Dutch Church, stated that Mathew had broken the Agreement of Utrecht in four ways: he had consecrated the two men without informing his fellow bishops; the service was performed in secret and without assistants; and the candidates were members of another communion. When the Archbishop of Utrecht asked Mathew to explain the consecrations, Mathew responded by criticizing disciplinary differences between his own English Church and continental Old Catholics. In January 1911 it was declared that Mathew was no longer an Old Catholic bishop of the Utrecht Union. The next Old Catholic conference of bishops in 1913 declared formally that it "... did not recognize Bishop Mathew or any of his acts."<sup>58</sup>

Mathew, now independent, made his small church his cathedral, and consecrated more bishops for his little flock. In only a few years his Church was known as: The English Catholic Church, The Catholic Church in England (Latin Unitee French), The Catholic Church in England (Latin and Orthodox United), Western Orthodox Catholic Church, The Ancient

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<sup>58</sup>Moss, The Old Catholic Movement, p. 304.

Catholic Church, and the Anglo-Catholic Church. The Bishop's titles became more and more exalted: Archbishop, Metropolitan and Patriarch. As Lathe's position became less favorable his titles and claims became more high sounding.

In April 1911 Bishop Lathe once again met the Archbishop Davidson. The Archbishop was asked to consider once again the possibility of receiving Lathe into the Church of England. Archbishop Davidson responded:

It will be honest that I should tell you plainly how the situation presents itself to me. I have never challenged your loyalty to the Christian faith, but I do challenge your loyalty to elementary principles of Church Order. You have handled -- I incline to say trifled with -- the great questions of the sort which give force to our prayers against schism. Your relations successively to the Church of Scotland, then to the Church of Rome, then to the Church of England again, then to the Old Catholics, then to the Eastern Church, then to the independent organization under our headship, then to the Church of Rome again, and now, as you suggest, to the Church of England again, give a store of loyalties and disloyalties which seems to me incompatible with any adequate sense of the responsibilities belonging to membership in an organised body which has Christ as its Head.

I cannot in honesty refrain from pointing out to you the position in which the men are placed who have been ordained or consecrated by you, whether validly or invalidly, and whose position now is -- what? There are, I think, some 7 or 8 men, perhaps more, whom you have purported to consecrate to the Episcopate ..., regularly or irregularly, validly or invalidly ... and now you ... (say) ... that you have decided to 'terminate the organisation'. Is this a tolerable position....?<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Bell, Randall Davidson, p. 1021.

Archbishop Davidson refused at this time and again in 1917 to give Mathew work in the Church of England. He was willing to have him in the Anglican Church only as a layman. Mathew died on 19 December 1919. While yet another request was being considered that would allow him to give assistance at the South Lyons church.

The Archbishop of Canterbury had sympathy for Mathew, and considered him basically a virtuous person, although unbalanced. His prime concern was with those who had been ordained and consecrated by Bishop Mathew, who were less honest and reputable than he. He rightly called attention to the schisms and scandals which would come out of the activities of Bishop Mathew. The Lambeth Conference of 1920 refused to recognize any episcopal acts of Bishop Mathew.

The protest that had been made by the 1908 Lambeth Conference had prompted the Dutch Old Catholic bishops to assert that they would consecrate no more candidates from England without first consulting the Church of England.

One of the most unusual groups ever affiliated with the Old Catholic Church was the Polish Mariavite Church. In 1883 the Reverend Kasimir Przyjenski formed a group of Franciscan Tertiaries among his fellow priests. In 1887 Maria Franciska Kozlowska organized a group for women, directed by the priests. On 2 August 1893 Miss Kozlowska, now Sister



Felicya, claimed to receive a vision of the Blessed Virgin, and a command to establish a mixed order of men and women dedicated to Saint Mary. The Tertiaries were united and known as the Mariavite Union. Sister Felicya continued to receive revelations, and the Mariavite Union grew quite large.

Polish Messianism was an important part of the Mariavite movement, and the extreme nationalism which was evident in the Polish National Catholic Church, was also influential. The movement operated homes for the aged and hospitals, and did other good work. The Jesuits opposed the Mariavites and investigated the twin-monasteries of monks and nuns. The order from Rome came to disband, and the visions of Sister Felicya were branded as hallucinations. The Mariavites ignored the order and were excommunicated by Pius X, in a Bull dated 5 April 1906.

At the time of the excommunication the Mariavites claimed 500,000 adherents. The number declined sharply after the papal Bull, and by 1907 was put at about 60,000. Through the influence of a Russian layman, General Alexei Kireef, the Mariavites gained the support of the Old Catholics of Holland. The Polish Church of Mariavites was admitted into the Utrecht Union, and on 13 October 1909, Archbishop Gul of Utrecht, with Bishop Father of Ireland, consecrated Jan Michael Nowalski, under the title of Archbishop of Felicjanov, Primate of the Old Catholic Church of the Mariavites. The new bishop

had an estimated 20,000 members served by forty priests in twenty-two parishes.

The Mariavite Church was largely orthodox in its early years, but the ritual and ceremonial became more and more exotic. There was a special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament exposed, and Mass in the vernacular was always celebrated before the exposed Sacrament. The celibacy of the clergy was abolished early in the development of the movement.

During World War I some drastic changes took place in the Church, particularly among its leaders. Permission was granted for the ordination of women, and Archbishop Kowalski came to the conclusion that he was infallible and sinless. "Mystical marriages" became common among the priests and sisters and women were even consecrated as "bishops."<sup>60</sup> The Utrecht Union of Churches was greatly disturbed at the events in Poland, and broke off all relations in 1924. There were movements within to reform the Mariavite Church, and Archbishop Kowalski was deposed in 1935, and was placed by the Polish Government in a monastery as the alternative to confinement in a mental hospital.

Bishop Philip Feldman succeeded Kowalski as the Chief Bishop of the Mariavites, although he was deported by the Nazis to Germany. He subsequently resigned his post and

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<sup>60</sup> Peter P. Anson, Bishops at Large (London: S.F.C.K., 1964), p. 517.

was reconciled with the Utrecht Old Catholics and served as a parish priest in the Rhineland.

In 1946 the Old Catholic Church of Mariavites formed a union with the Old Catholic Church of Poland, a body not in union with the Utrecht Old Catholics. The two bodies pooled their resources but retained their internal organizations and doctrinal teachings. Bishop Pryzysiecki of the Polish Old Catholic Church was elected head of the body, with Bishop Faron as his assistant. Faron had at one time been the Bishop of Poland for the Polish National Catholic Church. The union was beneficial to the two groups for it helped them to cope with the losses sustained during the war.

In 1964 the Old Catholic Church of Mariavites claimed some 25,000 members in Poland, in some forty-three parishes. There are five Bishops, two of whom were retired, and thirty-four priests. The Congregation of Sisters has some 200 members. In the past somewhat isolated from other Christian bodies, the Mariavites in recent years have participated in services for Christian Unity and in ecumenical discussions.

The other major schism in Old Catholicism took place in Yugoslavia in 1933 when the Conference of Old Catholic bishops broke off relations with Bishop Malonjers (see Chapter II). The bishops, meeting in Munich, declared on 14 March 1933:

... ample discussio fuit (1) de matrimonio tuo

clandestino, quo persona impuente periret; (2) de inmoderato rezimine tuo, quo factiones discidiique in ecclesia exorta sunt; (3) de tribus aut iudicio matrimoniali, quo vetero-catholica ecclesia differet; cuius conclusio fuit decretum subsequens; Conferentia episcopalis, die XIV Martii anno Domini 1923 congregata in Urbe Noracii Bavariae, post amplam discussionem statuit, reverendissimum episcopum Kalosjera ecclesiam vetero-catholicam in Jugoslevia non amplius repraesentare ideoque membrum Conferentiae episcopalis numerari desinere.<sup>61</sup>

Kalosjera continued to be recognized by the Yugoslav government, although no longer in communion with Utrecht. Bishop Kalosjera remained head of his group of Old Catholics until his death in 1957.

When Bishop Arnold Rathew was seeking a place in the Church of England, Archbishop Davidson wrote in September 1917 of him:

His harmfulness has lain in the real lightness (strenuously as he denies it) with which he played fast and loose with great questions of Church Order, and thus set going, in different ways and in different lands, schisms which it may take years to heal. He has given to ecclesiastical adventurers less honest than himself, an example fraught with abundant peril.<sup>62</sup>

Although written some fifty years ago, this statement has been all too accurate and still describes the condition among "wandering bishops" or episcopi vagantes today. Many of those who claim episcopal orders today are in the Rathew succession.

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<sup>61</sup>Henry A. C. Brandreth, Episcopi Vagantes and the Anglican Church (London: S.P.C.K., 1861), p. 115.

<sup>62</sup>Hell, Randall Davidson, p. 1022.

On 29 June 1913, Bishop Mathew consecrated Prince de Landas Berghes et de Roche, an Austrian nobleman, for work in Scotland. He went instead to the United States where he was the guest of many Episcopalians in the diocese of New York, and officiated in a number of Episcopal churches. He even participated in the laying on of hands at the consecration of the Rt. Rev. Miran R. Hulse, Missionary Bishop of Cuba, who was consecrated in the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine on 12 January 1915, thus introducing the Mathew succession into the American Episcopate.

Bishop de Landas is responsible for the two streams in America of the Mathew succession. On 3 October 1916 he consecrated William Henry Francis Brothers, and on the day following consecrated Carmel Henry Carfore. It is thought that de Landas was attempting to unite Old Catholics in the United States, although he was not authorized by his superior, Bishop Mathew, to perform any consecrations. At any rate the reason for the double consecration is very obscure, and later de Landas wrote Mathew asking that Bishop Brothers not be recognized. The two streams have developed separately, each claiming to be the only true body of Old Catholics in the United States, a claim which they share with more than one organization, and a claim which is not recognized at all by the respected Old Catholics of the Utrecht Union.

Carfore did not long remain under the authority of

de Lardas. The former Roman Catholic priest organized his own North American Old Roman Catholic Church, with headquarters in Chicago. The group did have some success in attracting scattered groups of Italians, Poles and Lithuanians in its early days, and later gained many members among the Negroes and Spanish-speakers.

The Old Roman Catholic Church conformed strictly to the "... prescriptions of the Pontificale, Missale, and Rituale Romanum."<sup>63</sup> Latin was prescribed universally although permission was given for the use of the vernacular. Clergy were expected to recite the Breviary and the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin. The Sacraments were administered according to the use of the Roman Catholic Church.

Disclaiming any connection with "Old Catholic" sectarian groups, Old Roman Catholicism strongly insisted on its orthodoxy and its rightful claim as the legitimate successor of the Church of Utrecht.

The Church honors the Virgin Mary as the Mother of God and holds the true Catholic doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ. The Church teaches the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament and the spiritual efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass for the living and for the dead.<sup>64</sup>

The Old Roman Catholic Church accepted the doctrine of transubstantiation, and taught the invocation of the saints,

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<sup>63</sup>Historical and Doctrinal Sketch of the Old Roman Catholic Church (2nd Ed.), 1950, p. 19.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

particularly of the "Glorious and Immaculate Mother of God."

Old Roman Catholicism recognized the supremacy of the pope, but rejected his claim to infallibility. Archbishop Carfora gave himself the title of "Most Illustrious Lord, the Supreme Primate of the North American Old Roman Catholic Church."<sup>65</sup> The Constitution of the Church stated that

The Supreme Primate is recognized as the Spiritual Head of the Church. All doctrinal laws or new articles of faith shall be considered final when he speaks ex cathedra .... He shall have full and exclusive jurisdiction over the whole Church in all matters ecclesiastical, civil, and temporal.<sup>66</sup>

Archbishop Davidson had called Bishop Mathew a "forerunner of schisms" but his successor as head of the Old Roman Catholic Church in North America far surpassed him in creating new churches and new bishops. Carfora himself consecrated more than twenty-five bishops, most of whom he excommunicated at some point. While some of the men were reputable, many brought nothing but scandal to the consecrating Archbishop.

In 1949 the North American Old Roman Catholic Church claimed some 47,500 members in the United States, in 39 churches and missions. There was a Benedictine monastery in Maryland and a Franciscan order centered in California. Saint Francis Theological Seminary in Chicago was established for candidates

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<sup>65</sup> Larson, Bishops at Large, pp. 422, 430.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

for the priesthood. Parishes were scattered throughout the country, with churches in California, Florida, Illinois, New York, Texas and Wisconsin.

At Archbishop Sarfara's death in January 1958 there was a split in the Old Roman Catholic Church. One group, the North American Old Roman Catholic Church, claims 87,500 members, while another, the North American Catholic Church, reports 84,565. The total claimed by these groups is twice that claimed by Sarfara at the time of his death. While the figures appear to have risen considerably, the number of quasi-Old Catholics has probably declined. The 1926 United States Census, for example, showed over 5000 members in three parishes in Massachusetts (Fall River, Lawrence and Worcester). By 1936 the number in these parishes had declined to about 1400. In 1966 no trace can be found of Old Roman Catholicism in these three cities.<sup>67</sup>

The other main stream of the Catholic succession, that of Archbishop Brothens, was less successful in its attempts to win American Old Catholics, and dissatisfied Roman Catholics and Episcopelians (who make up a large part of American Old Catholicism). Brothens was an associate for a time of Bishop Rozlowski (see Chapter III) and Bishop Grafton of the Episcopal diocese of Ford du Lac, in a Benedictine monastery in

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<sup>67</sup>At least two churches started by Archbishop Sarfara are now part of the Protestant Episcopal Church: Saint Rocco's Italian Church, Youngstown, Ohio, and Holy Family Mexican Church, McAllen, Texas.



discorsin. After Trafton's death the community was transferred to Naukegan, Illinois, and Brothers was elected the abbot.

De Landes consecrated William Henry Francis Brothers, hereafter known as Archbishop Francis, in the monastery at Naukegan. In 1917 a synod was held in Chicago for Old Catholic clergy, and the name of the new group was chosen: The Old Catholic Church in America. The movement did have some growth through the accession of members from an independent group of Portuguese Catholics centered in Massachusetts, under the Rt. Rev. Antonio Rodriguez. Several Polish congregations, under the Rt. Rev. Joseph Zielonka of New Jersey, were received in 1924. These churches had refused to join Bishop Hodur's Polish National Catholic Church.

The Old Catholic Church in America became affiliated with the Old Catholic Church of Mariavites in Poland, and Archbishop Francis took responsibility for the scattered Mariavite congregations in the United States. Arrangements were made for the union of the Old Catholic Church in America with Bishop Kelojcera of Yugoslavia, and also bodies in Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, France and England.

Archbishop Francis consecrated several bishops, although not as many as did Jarfore. The strangest consecration performed by him was that of William Montgomery Brown, a deposed bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in 1925. It is

difficult to understand how Francis could have consecrated Brown, who had admitted he was an atheist, and had been deposed from the episcopate of the Episcopal Church for heresy.

In 1951 the Church under Francis claimed some 6000 members in twenty-eight churches. A decade later the body claimed the same membership in twenty-two parishes, served by 18 priests. On 21 March 1962 the Old Catholic Church of America was received into the Russian Orthodox Church, the Patriarchal Exarchate, in New York City. The Most Reverend Archbishop Francis and three of his clergy were reordained and assigned as priests in charge of the Western Rite of the Orthodox Church. Archbishop Francis was given the rank of mitred-archpriest and retired to his monastery at Woodstock, New York.

Another large group of bishops and churches claim their succession through Joseph Rene Vilatte, who rivalled Bishop Mathew as an ecclesiastical adventurer. A former Roman Catholic, Vilatte was accepted by Bishop Brown of the Diocese of Ford du Lac in 1885 as a candidate for holy orders. It was planned to have him work among the Roman Catholic Belgians in Wisconsin, establishing an Old Catholic mission. Arrangements were made for Vilatte's ordination by the Old Catholic bishop of Switzerland, Bishop Ferroz. Vilatte returned to the United States and started several parishes among the French-speaking, using the Old Catholic liturgy while supported by

the Episcopal Church. His work flourished for a time and he was quite successful until he decided that he should be consecrated Old Catholic bishop for the United States. Bishop Grafton, who had succeeded Brown, broke with Vilatte and took the Old Catholic work directly under his control.

After some unsuccessful attempts to receive consecration from Bishop Terzor, Vilatte went to Ceylon where he was consecrated on 29 May 1892 by a Mar Julius Alvarez, of the Independent Catholic Church of Ceylon, Goa and India, who was affiliated with the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. Making the name Mar Timotheos, Vilatte returned to the United States as the Old Catholic Archbishop of North America.

Vilatte did not find much support on his return. He considered returning to the Roman Church but decided against that when he was approached by Stephen Kemiriski, leader of a group of Polish Catholics, for consecration (see Chapter III). Kemiriski was consecrated, but in fact led his group independently from Vilatte.

In 1915 Mar Timotheos formed the American Catholic Church, with headquarters in Chicago. That same year he received into his communion the Reverend F.E.J. Lloyd, a former Episcopal priest, who had been elected bishop coadjutor of Oregon in 1905, but whose election was refused by a minority of the Oregon convention. Lloyd had been noted as a preacher of missions in the Episcopal Church and his efforts for the

American Catholic Church brought a number of congregations under its jurisdiction. Lloyd became the archbishop in 1921.

In September 1921 Gillette consecrated the Reverend George A. McGuire, a former Episcopal priest, as the first bishop of the African Orthodox Church. McGuire, a Negro, felt that Negro Episcopalians and Roman Catholics should have their own Catholic Church. Bishop McGuire established a cathedral and a seminary for the training of Negro priests. The liturgy was clearly a composite of Anglican, Roman and Eastern Orthodox forms, and impressive.

The African Church demanded high moral standards, seeking

to be true to the principles of Christianity without the shameful hypocrisy of the white churches. (Edward Cronon, Black Moses (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1948), p. 178.)<sup>68</sup>

The church was distinguished by its appeal to race consciousness. The members were told to forget the white gods, and by 1924 the Black Madonna was the standard picture in the homes of African Orthodox people, and the worship of a Black Christ was preached. In August 1924 Bishop McGuire made a public appeal to Negroes

to name the day when all members of the race would tear down and burn every picture of the white Madonna and the white Christ found in their homes. (Cronon, Black Moses, p. 179.)<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>C. Eric Lincoln, The Black Muslims in America (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), p. 62.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., pp. 62, 63.

The movement was criticized by Negro clergy of other churches, but the movement did gain many followers in the United States, Canada, Cuba, Haiti and in Africa. There are still several thousand adherents of the African Orthodox Church, with an ample hierarchy provided.

In 1924 the Willette bodies under Archbishop Lloyd and the Father succession through Archbishop Darfons entered into a union with each other at a synod convened by Darfons in Chicago. The two bodies did unite to some degree, agreeing to adopt as a general title "The Holy Catholic Church in America," with each branch retaining its own distinctive name.<sup>70</sup> The agreement also provided for a joint periodical called The American Catholic, of which only one issue ever appeared. The union did not strengthen the bodies as had been hoped, and has not existed for many years.

After the death of Lloyd in 1933 the American Catholic Church declined steadily. Willette had returned to the Roman Church in 1925 and died in a French monastery in 1929. There are several groups claiming succession through Willette, although the American Catholic Church no longer exists.

There are many groups in the United States and Great Britain today under the leadership of claimants to Mathew and Willette successions, and other successions supposedly of Old

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<sup>70</sup> Frandret, Episcopi Latentes, p. 55.

Catholic or Western origin. For the most part the bodies claiming to be Old Catholic churches in the United States are nothing but shaky creations of "religious entrepreneurs."<sup>71</sup> Ordinations and consecrations are often bought and sold. The memberships reported are highly suspect and many consecrations exist only in the minds of the catholicos, hierarch, metropolitan, monsignor, pontifex, primate, patriarch, archbishop or bishop of the tiny groups. The churches are plagued by feuds and defections, excommunications and counter-excommunications.

Tent by schisms, the so-called Old Catholic bodies in the United States present a confusing picture. In some instances a store-front cathedral is served by an archbishop and several bishops - all claiming valid orders in the historic succession. The study of these movements is one which reveals those dissatisfied and unstable elements in Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism and Eastern Orthodoxy, although it is not limited only to Catholic Christianity.

A recent example of an episcopus vagans is the Rt. Rev. James E. Dees, a former Episcopal priest of the diocese of North Carolina. Leaving the priesthood in 1963 over disputes with his bishops concerning racial integration, Dees obtained reordination and consecration from two men who claimed valid

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<sup>71</sup>Whalen, Faith's for the Few, p. 49.

orders through Vilatte and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Dees is now Bishop Private of the Anglican Orthodox Church which has several congregations in the southern United States.

The term episcopus vagans as applied today to some of the bishops described above, is one who receives episcopal consecration irregularly or secretly; or if he has been regularly consecrated, and canonically, and has been excommunicated by his Church, functions as a bishop while not in communion with any historic see. In many cases the church over which a bishop presides exists for the sake of the bishop, rather than the bishop for the sake of the church.<sup>72</sup>

There is an obsession among the episcopi vagantes with the validity of their orders, and it appears that this validity is for them the sole mark of the nature of the Church and its authority. A Roman Catholic priest has commented that

What they have forgotten in their often wild and eccentric way is that even a valid apostolic succession is of small value unless it is possessed by a believing community that is a visible unity. This unity preserves and is preserved by its sensus fidelium and by the teaching authority of its united episcopate.<sup>73</sup>

Few of the groups founded by the episcopi vagantes were established because of theological disputes. Almost all arose because the founders had differences with the organized church or their bishops, and the only way apparently open to them was

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<sup>72</sup>Erardreth, Episcopi Vagantes, p. 2.

<sup>73</sup>Anson, Bishops at Large, p. 17.

to organize their own rival church. There have been those who thought that the end does justify the means as they established their own churches. Others in their fantasies, have seen their religious groups as the center for Christian unity.

The bishops who comprise the episcopi vagantes have been called the "ecclesiastical underworld" and the "no-man's-land" of Christianity.<sup>74</sup> Contrary to predictions made by some Churchmen, the number of "bishops-at-large" has not decreased in recent years, but has rather increased tremendously. There are an estimated two hundred of them, primarily in the United States, Great Britain and France.

The former archbishop coadjutor to Archbishop Carfaro, Francis M. Donohue, wrote in the early 1960's:

The future of Old Catholic Churches in America depends upon a complexity of factors: seminaries for the training of candidates for the priesthood; sounder parochial administration and closer integration of semi-isolated clergy and parishes into established dioceses; more attention to the apostolate of the press; and less emphasis on sectional divisions . . . . There seems little likelihood that these churches will seek union with Utrecht. The tendency is rather toward Eastern Orthodoxy, with whose doctrinal and liturgical position there is a more basic agreement than with Continental Old Catholicism with its increase of modernism and Protestantism.<sup>75</sup>

Shortly after writing this Bishop Donohue left the North American Old Roman Catholic Church and became a priest in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. He is now a prominent priest in

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 15, 30.

<sup>75</sup> 20th Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, II, p. 815.



the Patriarchal Exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, following the way of a number of bishops and clergy of the quasi-Old Catholic groups.

The Roman Catholic Church recognizes the validity of the orders of the bishops-at-large, although considering them irregular and uncatholic. The Eastern Orthodox and Anglican Churches have not in the past recognized the validity of these orders, although some episcopi vacantes have been allowed to exercise their priesthood in the Episcopal Church or the Church of England. The Old Catholic Churches of the Utrecht Union do not speculate on the validity or invalidity of these orders. The orders are simply not recognized, and there is no connection whatsoever with the many quasi-Old Catholic groups.

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